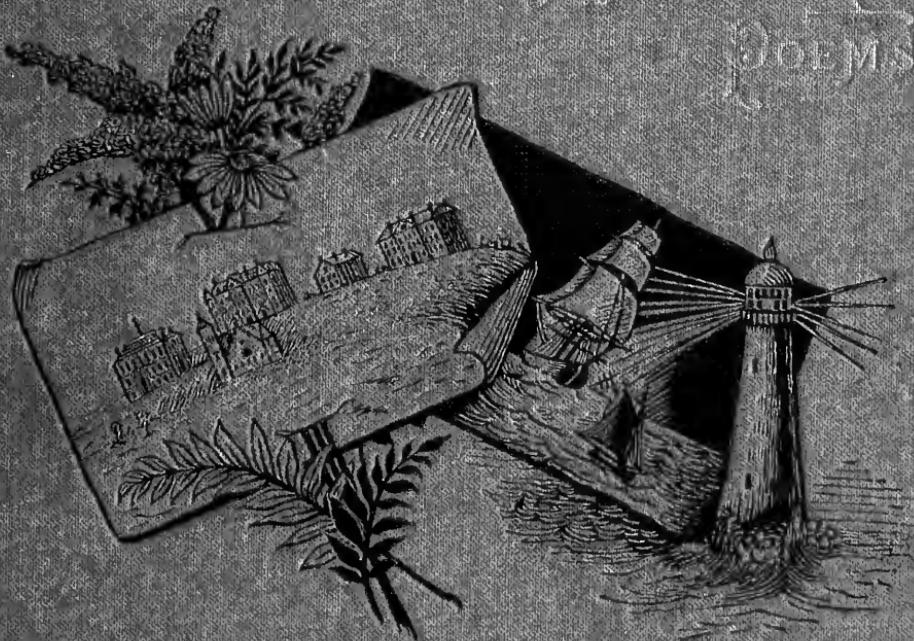


HOLIDAY IDLESSE

ANTHONY'S GARDEN

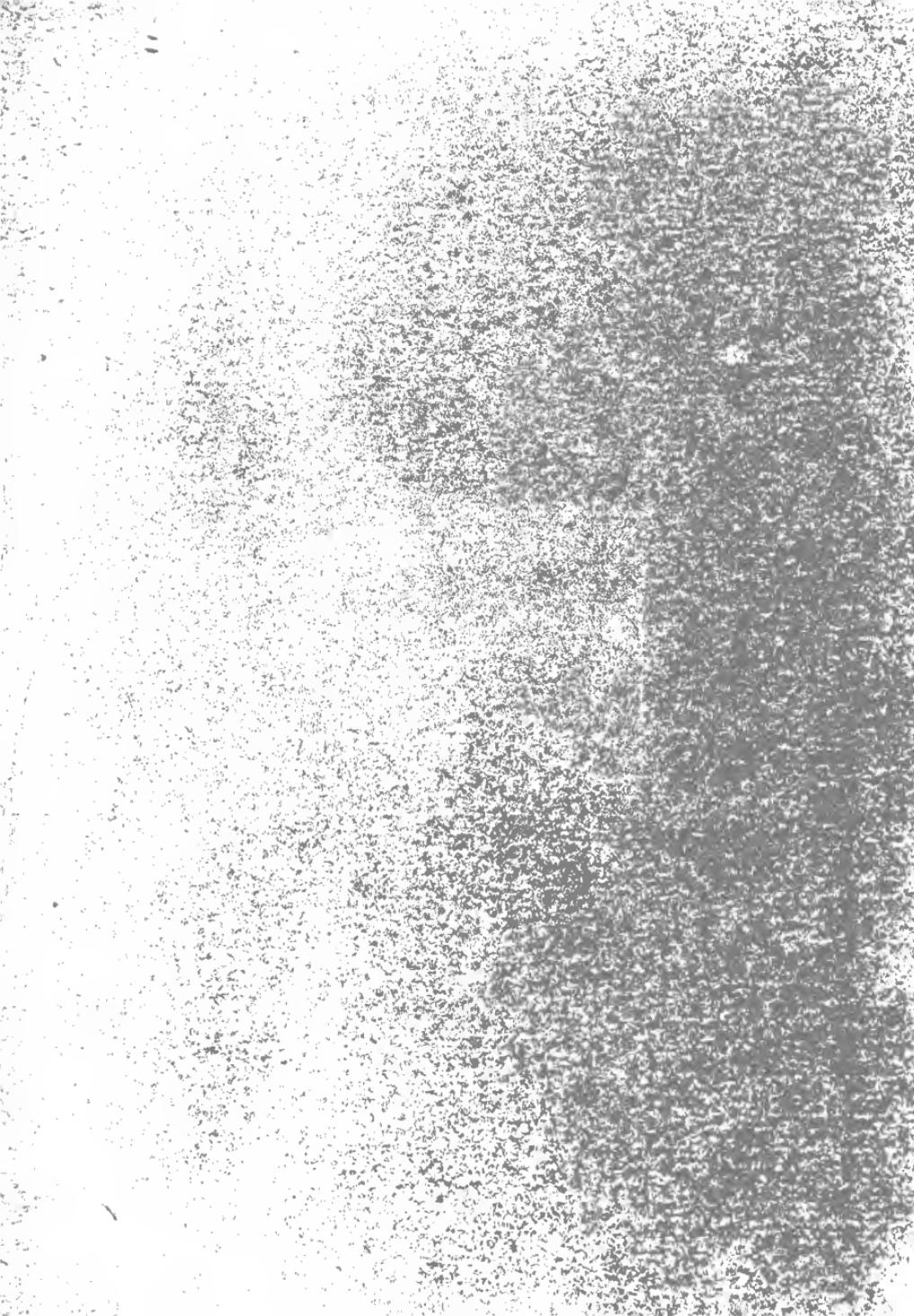


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“O'er the wave, through long watery alleys of trees,
Under thick-hanging mosses soft-swinged by the breeze.”

—*Frontispiece.*

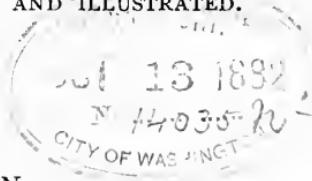
—*Page 140.*

HOLIDAY IDLESSE,

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY JAMES H. WEST.

NEW EDITION, ENLARGED AND ILLUSTRATED.



BOSTON:
A. WILLIAMS & CO., PUBLISHERS,
Old Corner Bookstore.
1882.

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BY JAMES H. WEST.

DEDICATION.

To HER whose sympathetic heart
Hath been my stay ;
Whose gentle hand hath guided me
In all my way ;
Whose teachings in my childhood's hours
Were love alone ;
Whose arms of counsel, now in youth,
Are round me thrown ;
To her whose bright example is
My guiding star ;
Whose love and faith are firmer than
The hills afar ;
Whose presence hovers o'er me like
Some holy dove ;
To HER these little songs are given,
In grateful love.

NOTE TO THE EDITION OF 1880.

[ALL of the verses here printed, with one or two exceptions, have before been in type. Some of them have been copied extensively,—at times coming back to me from far wanderings. They have oftentimes made me warm friends, and this at least I have, as a reward for the hours devoted to them. They all have been written at random moments, in the intervals of busy youthful years. I ask not, however, on this account, favor for them: they are printed for what they are worth. Their reception in the past leads me to believe them not unworthy their present form.]

NOTE TO THE PRESENT EDITION.

THE very cordial reception extended to the first edition of these poems, published nearly two years ago, has led to this second issue, the present edition being much enlarged.

The current volume contains almost all of the shorter poems for which the author desires to be held responsible. Such others of his verses as are fugitives in the land, wandering about in the columns of local newspapers, nameless and unaccredited, he hardly regrets to disown: although it is true that whenever he meets them, altered in dress very often, and changed in feature still as his children he would fain take them in his arms.

It may be only just to himself to say that many of the pieces here printed were written when the author was not twenty years old, the remainder having appeared during the four or five years since intervening.

Next preceding the Table of Contents are printed five lines,—“The Poet’s Forethought,”—which were prefixed to the volume of 1880. Following the Epilogue, “Finished,” at the close of the present edition, will be found ten companion lines,—“The Poet’s Afterthought,”—inspired by the warmth of the reception accorded to the first volume, and first printed with “Kalligo,” on the original publication of that poem in 1881.

To his friends, near and far, the author would extend his cordial greeting, and his thanks for their continued kindly encouragements. And for himself, in publishing this little volume anew, he desires no happier return than the fuller fruition of his aspiration as contained in the closing lines of his Proem and of his Epilogue.

J. H. W.

COLLEGE HILL, Mass., 1882.

LINES.

THE POET'S FORETHOUGHT.

I TOOK within my hand
The clay and potter's wheel:
Who knows?...the model I have planned
To marble may anneal,—
Or crumble into sand.

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"O'er the wave, through long watery alleys of trees,
Under thick-hanging mosses soft-swinged by the breeze."
—*Frontispiece*.

"Full many a placid hour
 Beside thy edge I've strayed,
And many a sylvan bower
 Has Fancy there displayed."
—*Page 38.*

"The hut, like the owner, was tottering fast."
—*Page 126.*

P R E L U D E.

O FRIENDS of mine! whose kindly words
have led
Unto the gathering of these wayside
flowers,—
These wilding blossoms of my happier
hours!.....
As one who, walking in a garden bed,
Turns wearily from poppies fiery red,
Wanders from where the flaming peony
towers,
Passes the odorous pinks, the kalmia
bowers,
And through the gateway strolls, that
he may tread
The quiet forest-path, and feel the kiss
Of cooling breezes, and behold alone
The modest violet's blue, and clover
mild,—
So you, ye say, would wander! But the
bliss.....
The bliss ye seek! Dreaming fair seed
were sown,
What if ye here find weeds,—weeds
only,—tangled, wild!

PROEM.

O, STRANGE are the songs that the wild birds sing,
And weird the refrain when the zephyrs of Spring
First rustle through branches new burdened with
green;

O, quaint is the forest's dim silence and shade,
And wild the loud Ocean's entombed cannonade
'Neath perilous cliffs and mad gorges between:

But stranger and quainter, more weird and more
wild,

Are the Songs which the listening Bards have be-
guiled,

In mystical cadences sung in their ear!
For them chant the birds a more marvelous strain,
For them beats the tempest a wilder refrain,
Than others than they are enabled to hear!

Thus down through the ages come mystical rhymes,
Which Minstrels have rung on their harps betimes,
Enchanting men's lives with their symphonies
sweet;

Thus down through the Future shall Troubadours
sing,
And sweet Serenaders their melodies bring,
Till earth be with marvelous anthems replete.

Perchance the weird Minstrel may soon be forgot;
His birth and his grave be rememberèd not,
Nor aught but his Muse keep his memory green :
But vernal forever, till centuries die,
Shall ring out his Songs to the verberant sky,
Like musical chimes from a belfry unseen!.....

Nor mine may it be to attain to a niche
In temples whose walls the more favored en-
rich,—
Whose songs, though as fervent, are feeble to
theirs :
But happy indeed were my heart and my pen,
Perchance if some brief benediction to men
My verse might contain in its lines unawares !



HOLIDAY IDLESSE,

AND OTHER POEMS.



HOLIDAY IDLESSE.

COLLEGE HILL, MID-SUMMER, 1879.

I sit beside my window here,
And dream away the day.
The air is calm, the sky is clear,—
And yonder, down the Bay,

Along the silvery rim of light
That marks the Ocean's edge,
Fair far-off slanting wings of white
Sail slow beyond the ledge ;—

Beyond the ledge of towering rocks
That mark the heights of Lynn ;—
Beyond to where the Equinox
Shall howl with awful din.

O stay at home, ye stately ships !
O stay at home as I !
Nor sail to meet but sure eclipse
Beneath an angry sky !

The wandering thought, the impatient heart,
The discontented soul,
At best can know of life but part,
And not the rounded whole.

But ah ! ye cannot stay !—e'en now
Your sails are seaward set :
E'en now above your burdened bow
The fluttering sea-gulls fret.

And soon I too must hence away,
To skirt uncharted shores !
Already in my ears the spray
Of ocean conflict roars.

'Tis well ! 'tis well, ye stately ships !
Ye were not made for calm !
Your keels were laid to bear to lips
That hunger, Eastern balm.

'Tis well no port of listless peace
Enshields your slothful sail :
The ship that gains the Golden Fleece
Must dare the Euxine gale.

'Tis well, O heart, no life of ease
Before thee opens fair !
That perfect life would fail to please
Which breathed but softer air.

'Tis not when zephyrs kindly blow,
And calmly, sweetly steal ;
When waters musically flow,
And laugh along the keel ;

'Tis in the dashing of life's wave,
And in the sudden shock ;
'Tis when the soul, though stout and brave,
Is ground as on the rock,

That life's objective port is neared,
Its noblest courses run,
And souls of men the straightest steered
To lands beyond the sun.

M A N.

A PHANTASY?

I.

He does not think—he does not know:
A wave is breaking on the shore;
A wave surcharged with richest ore,
And tinged with deepest golden glow.

He heeds it not—he does not know:
It scatters pearls athwart his path;
It bathes as in a purple bath
The boundaries where his feet must go.

He heeds it not—he passes by
It breaks, it bursts upon the strand,
Its wealth is squandered on the sand,
Its pearls in shattered fragments fly.

II.

He does not know—he does not guess.
A flower is blossoming at his feet;
A flower is offering incense sweet—
And fading in the wilderness.

He heeds it not—he passes on:
Its purple petals droop and die;
Its wealth is wasted on the sky:
It might have bloomed by Helicon.

III.

He does not know—he does not dream:
A star is gleaming in the sky;
A star that passeth swiftly by!
A star that flames alone for him.

He sees nor feels its cheering light:
It glows and gleams indeed, to-day;—
To-morrow, deepening into gray,
Shall find it vanished in the Night.

IV.

He does not dream—he does not think:
A fountain gushes at his hand;
Its wealth he does not understand:
He looks nor moves, nor stoops to drink.

V.

He does not think—he does not know:
A song is trembling through the air;
A bird is warbling anthems rare,
And murmuring lyrics sweet and low.

He hears nor heeds—he passes on.
And wings are raised—a birdling flies;
The trembling cadence fails and dies:
The anthem and the bird are gone.

VI.

He does not know—he does not dream :
A wave, a flower, a star, a song,
A fountain—all to him belong,
And all exist alone for him.

SUNSET.

FROM COLLEGE HILL, OVERLOOKING THE MYSTIC.

THE day is done :
The imperial Sun
Is sinking, now his course is run,
Behind the hills of Arlington.

Through purple mist
I view the tryst
The sunbeams keep with the clouds they kissed
While descending the vale of amethyst.

Through amber haze
I view the blaze
Forth-streaming in red level rays
Over hill-side paths and forest ways.

As Moses' rod,
Through Moses' God,
Was lifted where the Israelites trod,
Ere yet through the waves they rode dry shod,—

So the Sun's last blaze,
These Autumn days,
Its rod of lurid enchantment lays
Where the Mystic's crimson current plays!

And as Moses' word
The Red Sea heard,
So here, since its waves the sunset blurred,
The hurrying current has not stirred!

A shadowy line
Across the brine
Is flung from the bank where a giant pine
Beside the river doth low incline.

This,—this, in my dream,
The place doth seem
Where the God of the Jews, by Arabia's stream,
The Egyptian bondsmen did redeem !

The Sun sinks low :
Weird breezes blow ;
And over the river, or fast or slow,
Gaunt hurrying shadows come and go.

'T is the host—the host
That did lately boast
Of the power of God and the Holy Ghost !—
Now shivering here on the Red-Sea coast !

But the Sun goes down,—
And the shadows brown
Grow black and ominous under the frown
Of mists that fall in the waves and drown.

These,—these are the ranks
That on Nilus' banks
Afflicted the Jews without respite or thanks !
Ev'n now how the slave-drivers' harness clanks !—

For a sullen roar,
As of chains on a floor,
Comes up from where pebbles roll o'er and o'er,
As the ripples rush sobbing against the shore.

But a wind sweeps down,
Like Jehovah's frown!
And the billows go hurrying tow'rds the town,—
And Pharaoh's hosts in the whirlpool drown!

And now in the sky,
Serene and high,
Floats the shield of Omnipotence tranquilly;
And the “pillar of fire by night” is nigh!.....

—O heart! like the Jews,
To be led ye choose
From a land where Doubts and Fears abuse,
To a land where Faith all Fear subdues!

The prizes are mean
That intervene:
Be sundered! divided! O vapory screen!
And give us to walk unscathed between.

“WHITHER, YE STATELY SHIPS!”

FROM WINTHROP HEAD.

WHITHER, ye stately Ships,
In grandeur do ye ride?—
Oh! do ye never tremble, dreading dire eclipse,
As silently ye glide
Athwart the Ocean’s lips?

Far o’er the widening seas
Ye sail to beauteous lands,—
Alike, ’mid Behring’s ice and Sunda’s odorous ease,
Obedient to the hands
Which bend you to the breeze.

Proudly your course ye take
Where ne’er before went keel;
Or follow in the track where thirsty myriads slake
The intense Desire they feel
For far-off loved-ones’ sake!

Gibraltar's frowning rocks
May shadow you in gloom ;
But when ye have outridden the vengeful Equinox,
Ye find deep harbor-room
Where ne'er come tempest-shocks.

Outward indeed, ye fly,
And farthest oceans trace ;
But if ye once shall gain the sought Sicilian sky,
Homeward ye then may race
In gladdest ecstasy !

Never a cargo bear
Of shame or crime, O ships !
Better that whirlwind rend, or treacherous waves
insnare,
Than that Contagion's lips
Should taint your Heaven-free air !

But far as oceans stretch,
Or Austral's islands rise,
Wing ye Love's message to the wild despairing
wretch

Who, fainting, seeks the Prize
He finds not lest ye fetch !

Scorched amid Central Zone,
Crushed by Ar.tarctic ice,
Ever, O stately ships! your nobler birthright own,
Nor plunge, a sacrifice,
With but a gurgling groan !

Back! bring our sons safe back!—
Our brothers, lovers, friends !
We had not let them sail with you your venturous
track,
But that our faith extends
Beyond a drifting wrack !

Never betray, O ships,
The trust reposed in ye !
But firm as Boatman builds, and stanch as he
equips,
Sail ye an Argosy
That meets nor dreads eclipse !

“A BREATH FROM THE FIELDS.”

[To * * * *, who sent me a box of spring blossoms, with these words: “Taking my usual walk after tea, last evening, I came to a place dotted with violets. Beginning to gather them, I thought of you in your city home. Deeming that a breath from the fields would brighten that home a little, I take the liberty to send you a few.”]

“A BREATH from the fields! ”....

Ah me!

Could I paint the vision I see!

For under the spell of these flowers

The avenue, busy and hot,

And the office, and work, are forgot;

And these granite and marble towers

Quick vanish away, and quick

The whole desert of fiery brick.

“A breath from the fields! ”....

All day

My spirit has languished to stray

From the City of Turmoil. And now,

On the magical carpet of Thought,

On the pinions these blossoms have brought,
I am wandering where the bough
Of the elm with the maple blends,
And the song of the robin ascends!

“A breath from the fields!”.....
The sweets
Of a myriad marguerites
Are flooding with incense the air!
And a dream my heart besets
As I gaze on the violets—
A dream and a splendor rare—
Of a brook where the blood-root drinks,
And the laughter of bobolinks.

“A breath from the fields!”.....
I catch
A view of the leafy thatch
That waves on the meadow’s marge.
I roam in the shadows of trees
Like those in Hesperides!
And I pluck from the branches the large
White beautiful apple-sprays,
Till the pain in my heart allays.

“A breath from the fields!”.....

Thank God

For the friend who kneeled on the sod

To gather such glory for me!

The blossoms will fade; but depart

Will they never from out of my heart.

There, forever, their beauty will be,
Like the blossoms that gladden the eyes
Of the dwellers in Paradise.

BOSTON, May 11, 1881.

—

SWEETEST SONGS ARE NEVER SUNG.

I.

THE sweetest songs are never sung,—

So the Poets say.

The tenderest chords are never strung;

The merriest bells are never rung.



Well-a-day !

Well-a-day !

Let the Poets have their way !

Let them have their way ! —

All that sighing Minstrels sing can never me
dismay.

I can hear sweet bells go pealing — pealing joy-
ously to-day !

I can hear their silvery pealing — hear their merry
roundelay !

II.

THE fairest pearls are never found, —

So Professors say.

The cheeriest trumpets never sound ;

The jauntiest vessels go aground.

Well-a-day !

Well-a-day !

Let Professors have their way !

Let them have their way ! —

All that dull Professors dream can never me
dismay !

I can see stanch ships go sailing—sailing ever proudly by!

I can see tall masts and rigging outlined grandly against the sky!

III.

THE saintliest prayer is never said,—
So the Preachers say.

The daintiest board is never spread;
The loveliest maid is never wed.

Well-a-day!

Well-a-day!

Let the preachers have their way!

Let them have their way!—

All that dullard Parsons dream can never me
dismay!

I myself perchance know somewhat of the lights
along the shore:—

I myself am soon to wed that loveliest maiden
they deplore!

BEACON-LIGHTS.

SONNET.

THE brilliant beacon-lights that bound the shore
Guide safe the storm-tossed mariner to port:
What matter, green or gold, or tall or short?
What matter, shown from rock, or bluff, or tower?
He questions not their color, size, or power,
But heeds their warning with his every thought:
He heeds their warning, and the ship is brought
To home and harbor in a happy hour.—
Along the headlands of Life's turbulent sea
Aye gleam undimmed the guiding lights of Love!
What matter, Jew, Greek, Christian, if the Light
Be followed faithfully?—It then shall be
A Guiding Light indeed, to Ports above:
A pillar of cloud by day, of fire by night.

THE YACHTSMAN'S PENNANT.

MOURNFUL I stand on the solitary shore,
And feel the misty sea-fogs drifting in.—
Above the wind-swept islands, o'er and o'er,
The darkling clouds of atmospheric gloom
From sight the vistas of the sea entomb,
And curtain off the scene as though it had not
been.

But suddenly, amid the thickening fog,—
In yonder spot where deepest lies the gloom,
And sea and air hold closest dialogue,—
The drifting density a moment parts,
And swift to earth heaven's gleaming sunshine
darts,
Revealing where the top-masts of a yachtsman
loom.

Proudly her pennant to the breeze unfolds,
And bids my eye to read the inscription there.

I look: and in the characters it holds
There gleams the bright emblazoned title, HOPE!
Methinks I here may trace the horoscope
Of life! and gladsome Faith doth banish my de-
spair.

PENTECOST.

“Wohlauf! es ruft der Sonnenschein
Hinaus in Gottes freie Welt!”

—TIECK: *Zuversicht.*

“ Pentecost, which brings
The Spring.”—LONGFELLOW.

O SLUGGISH slumberer, awake!—
The sunlight calls thee!
Earth’s sullen clods beneath thee quake;
The promised buds of Springtide break;
The green sedge quivers by the lake.
No longer Winter’s gloom appalls thee;—
But out where birds and blossoms wake,
God’s sunlight calls thee!

The bobolink beside the brook
Sings, never weary ;
The sobbing pine, so long forsook,
Is loud with caw of crow and rook ;
And where the snow-hung elder shook,
And sighed through all the Winter dreary,
The robins, as in *Æsop's Book*,
Chant loud and cheery.

Within the woodland green and wild,
The fern is springing ;
And near the maiden-hair so mild,
And golden mosses high up-piled,
The violet, Nature's favorite child,
Its fragrance on the air is flinging.—
How often hath its breath beguiled
My heart to singing !

O weary soul ! beset by toil
From dawn till gloaming !—
Like Bunyan's Pilgrim, flee the broil !
Forsake the city's ceaseless moil ;

Come out, and tread the tender soil
Of Beulah, where no footstep, roaming,
Fails of the priceless wine and oil
Of Nature's foaming !

Pale students ! poring over books
And musty Latin !—
Shakespeare read sermons in the brooks !
Through far Ionian seas and nooks
Old Homer, godlike in his looks,
Roved singing of earth's robe of satin !
And Virgil's shepherds timed their crooks
To Nature's matin !

O aching feet ! enforced to tread
Hot urban places !—
That fain would wander, fain would wed
The velvet of some mossy bed !
Ye sometime, as the Prophet said,
Shall rove the wide Eternal spaces !—
Rove sometime with the happy dead,
In heavenly places !

O sorrowing heart!—for her, for her,
Who left thee weeping!
Canst thou not deem this wondrous stir
Of Springtide leaf and gossamer
A mild angelic minister?—
This wakefulness, where all was sleeping,
Is it not Heaven's own messenger
To stay thy weeping?

Shall not the clouds that roll afar
On Life's horizon,
Flee too, like Winter's broken bar?
And in their stead a glittering star
Arise, that Æons shall not mar?
This is the hope our heart relies on;—
And such shall be! when rolls ajar
Heaven's fair horizon!



CONCORD RIVER.

My soul to-day,
O River, wandering seaward,
Is with thee!
From out the gray
Of Memory—hurrying leeward—
Radiantly,
As in a dream
Of friends dead or at a distance,
I behold
Thy fair, faint gleam ;
And for thy glad existence,—
Gay with gold
As where there waits
Eternal sunrise Yonder
At the gates
Of sapphire,— I
A grateful prayer do ponder,
Tremblingly.

O strange, O mystic stream!—

Slow winding to the sea:

Oft in my nightly dream

Thy vision comes to me!

Within my slumber I behold thy placid wave,

And look with joy on thy majestic sweep;

And with the answering smile I crave

Thou smilest in my sleep!

Oft in my light-keeled boat,

Thy tremulous wave afloat,

Thy bosom me hath borne,

Thy strength my weakness known,

Till wearying care, and scorn,

And every fear, were flown;

Until, with spell most magical,

Thou in my bosom quelled

All phantoms tragical,

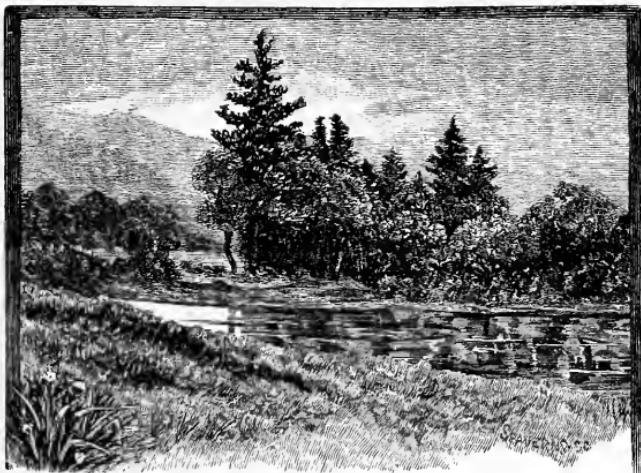
And pain and doubt dispelled,

As when a cloud upon thy breast removes,

And down the sun shines on the sea it loves.

Full many a placid hour

Beside thy edge I've strayed,



“Full many a placid hour
Beside thy edge I’ve strayed,
And many a sylvan bower
Has Fancy there displayed.”

—*Page 38.*



And many a sylvan bower
Has Fancy there displayed.

Below thy historic Battle-Bridge thou coursest
through a plain,
There 'mid thy wide lone meadow-lands to turn
and turn again :

But in thy narrower, wooded course, where trees
thy waves o'erhang,

And where the verdure thickly lies as where the
Sirens sang,—

Here many a leafy, shady dell
My feet of yore have found,
Nor deemed ye had a parallel
The wide earth round.

Full oft beside thy vernal banks,
What time might come Spring's jocund charioteer,
Have I been mute observer of the thanks
With which ye knew earth's natal glories near ;—
Rippling in gratitude when ye should learn
Had come the blushing violet and fern !
Plashing thy emerald edge
With joyous dew,

Ye kissed with welcome pledge
Earth's offerings new.

And I have seen thy greeting to the stars,
As one by one they flecked thy unruffled floor—
 Venus, and red-browed Mars,
 And countless myriads more,
 Gleaming amid the eternal height,
 The golden diadems of Night.
And when unto her full might grow
 The round red harvest moon,
 The one above and one below
 Made midnight like to noon :
For mirrored wondrously within thy tide,
 Graved by a Hand unseen thy bosom o'er,
 Stood every fleck amid heaven's arches wide,
 And every shade and shadow of the shore :
Each crooked twig, each fluttering leaf, was there,
 As truly represented as in air :
And scarce the line the wave and land between,
 So perfect was the juncture, could by eye be seen.

Amid the verdant foliage at thy side,
 Unknown to all the world but thee and me,

A countless classic host have lived and died,
And linger now not e'en in memory.
My books indeed have taught
Of many a classic scene and holy age;
Yet to my soul with wisdom full as fraught
Has been thy Springtime foliage!
For I have looked through thee as through a portal,
And met the wondrous gaze of the Immortal!

1878.

THE MURMURING CITY AND THE
ANSWERING OCEAN.

LEAVING the busy, brawling bustle,
Leaving the heedless haste and hustle
Of the never-silent city,
Alone I sought the precincts peaceful of the roll-
ing ocean,—
Rolling, rolling, never ceasing.

Beating for me within the city,
Beating with throbs of tender pity
Was there scarce a single bosom;
But continuous and tender were the throbings of
the ocean,—
Throbbing, throbbing, never ceasing.

Tremblingly, “ ‘Tis the heart of Nature,’ ”
Said I, “ answering to the stature
Of the longing in my bosom
For the highest, holiest manhood—for the noblest
truest manhood!—
‘T is the tremulous heart of Nature.”

Truly, my soul!—but more:—the rather,
‘T was the tremulous heart of the Father!
‘T was the sympathy of the Highest,—
Of the Highest, Holiest, Truest,—of the Creator
to the creature,
In his aspirations Heavenward!

"A DEAR LITTLE BIRD."

A DEAR little bird, on a little low tree,
Sat swinging and balancing merrily.

"O dear little bird, ere away you shall fly,
Pray sing me your sweet little song!" said I.

With silvery voice, from his brave little throat,
The bird made glad melody, note upon note.

"O dear little innocent birdie!" I cried,
"I fain would invite you in faith to my side!"

Right instantly down, from the little low tree,
The bird in all trustfulness flew to my knee.

"O dear little bird, with thy coronet red,
Still nearer, and rest in my bosom!" I said.

Close up to my heart flew the dear little bird,—
Nor ever once since from my presence has stirred.

O Truth! like the bird, from the midst of Life's
tree,

Come fly to my heart and dwell likewise with me!

1877.

MY DRAGON-FLY.

[One day during the Summer there flew in at my open window in Boston a huge dragon-fly. Without the slightest hesitation my winged visitant perched himself, very familiarly, upon my writing-table; and with quivering wings—four great gauzy webs of wings—sat for a moment silently though with glistening eye gazing steadfastly into my face. What had called the tiny messenger from the sweet fields and rippling water-courses of his native haunts, to the dust and aridity of city life, I could not determine. However, as he flew in at my window, I had just opened and was then reading a fraternal letter from a dear friend, dated at his summer-home at Vineyard Haven (Island of Martha's Vineyard), in which letter he play-

fully wished himself a humming-bird, a butterfly, or some other insect-angel, in order that he might fly to my office for an hour and "whisper in my ear" the delights of his rural and sea-side home! The coincidence of my friend's wish and the strange presence with me of the dragon-fly at the moment, amused me. And the above will sufficiently account for the supposititious *scene* of the Sonata with which my tiny visitant, during his brief stay, was pleased to favor me; for the following lines, although printed under my name, were in reality "whispered in my ear" by the dragon-fly, during his not unwelcome presence upon my writing-table that summer afternoon. When the sweet little soloist had finished, he again took wing, vanishing as he had come. I called after him, for I fain would have had him stay; but he did not answer. I have often wished him back; but as yet, he has not come.]

SONATA OF THE DRAGON-FLY.

I COME, I come, from distant shores;—
From where the wide Atlantic roars
 Around my island home;
Where pebbly strands unbroken lie,
Ringed round with spray-cloud mystery,
 Ringed round with silvery foam!

I come from where the trembling pine
Chants chorus to the heaving brine,
 Chants sonnets to the sea;

From where the myriad-leavèd elm,
On brink of wide Neptunian realm,
Breathes soulful melody.

I come from meadowy retreats,
Where violets and marguerites
 The livelong day repose ;
Where jauntily the golden-rod
And tufted stalks of asters nod,
 Mingled with sweet-brier rose.

I come from where the rippling brook
Flows free through many a sylvan nook,
 Then leaps into the sun ;
Where ferns and grasses guard the brink
Where butterflies descend to drink,
 Their glad life just begun.

I come from where the oriole's nest
Hangs hidden beyond the eager quest
 Of hawk or schoolboy hand ;
From where the yellow-bird's golden hue
Flits by with a flash across the blue
 Of the high arch overspanned.

I come from where at eventide
The stars in majestic beauty glide,
 Outvying Arabia's days ;
Where nightly the fire-fly's delicate lamp
Gleams bright on the background cold and
 damp
 Of the furry, tasselled maize.

I come from where no thirst of man
Encircles the earth with rule and span,
 Or measures the soul with a gauge :
From where the rustic may worship God,
And fear no threatening beck or nod
 In childhood, youth, or age.

I come, I come, from distant shores ; —
From where the wide Atlantic roars
 Around my island home ;
Where pebbly strands unbroken lie,
Ringed round with spray-cloud mystery,
 Ringed round with silvery foam !

A FACE, AND A RACE.*

I ONCE in a dream ran a race
From College-Hill halls to Cremona.
I once fell in love with a face,
And dreamed it a love for the owner.

The pathway was pleasant and green :
I dreamed it would never grow dreary.
The face, like a beautiful scene,
Illumined my heart when aweary.

But the road became wet—as by craft!
With mud and with water it stained me.
I told her my love—and she laughed!
Nor cared she a whit how it pained me.

I awaked from my dreaming, alas !
And never arrived at Cremona.
And the beautiful face—let it pass !
Let it fade from my heart, like the owner !

* From an unprinted college romance.

COLLEGE HILL.

[WRITTEN AFTER LONG ABSENCE.]

ONE thought to-day, and one alone,
Has filled th' horizon of my mind :
And fairer sunbeam never shone
On eyes that long had wandered blind.
My heart to-day, with happy thrill,
Has been with thee, O College Hill !
With thee, with thee,
O College Hill !

The thunder of far Alpine Hills,
The storm-cloud of the Southern Seas,
The murmur of Spain's murmuring rills,—
Of these I've dreamed—nor dreamed of
ease.
But happiest thoughts my bosom fill
Whene'er I turn, O College Hill,
To thee, to thee,
O College Hill !

The room grows wide wherein I sit:
These narrow, city walls expand:
I see again thy robin flit,
I see thy lawns on every hand,—
As green, as vocal, as the rill
That danced adown the sacred hill
Of Helicon,
O College Hill!

I see thy rising slopes,—thy halls ;—
O Mother-Earth ! thou'rt greener there!
And gentler be the rain that falls,
And sweeter, balmier be the air,
Forever, and forever still,
Upon thy breast, O College Hill !
On thy loved breast,
O College Hill !

Again I seem to see thy trees,—
Thy silver-maple, mountain-ash ;
And dearer to my heart are these
Than Eastern vine or calabash !

I would not part with these, to till
By fair Euphrates, College Hill!

Or Gihon's edge,
O College Hill!

Again I see,—more blest than all,—
Full many a dear, remembered face ;
Again I hear the laugh, the call,
The cheer that rang from place to place,—
The laugh and cheer that echo still
About thy halls, O College Hill,
Could I but hear,
O College Hill!

Again, in thought, I grasp the hand
Of comrades north and southward gone ;—
I follow them! and in the land
Of Danube, Rhine and Amazon
Again I feel the electric thrill
I knew on thee, O College Hill,
When hand clasped hand
On College Hill!

O sacred slopes! where first my heart
With wider hope for man was fired!
Be ne'er forgot, though years depart,
The Hope Eternal there inspired!
And, dying, could my body fill
A grave on thee, O College Hill,
I'd die content,
O College Hill!

OLD TIMOTHY JOHN, AND HIS FRE-
QUENT REFRAIN,

“POTATOES! OH, POTATOES!”

A CHARACTER SKETCH.

Not all the heroes of the earth
Have gained their victory with the sword:
Not every child of noble birth
Hath borne the escutcheon of a lord.

Full oft, perchance, by crumbling tomb,
By darkling waters' whirling flow,
May star-eyed asters beauteous bloom,
And fragrant-everlasting grow!

OLD TIMOTHY JOHN was a marvelous man,
And always a happy one, too, as he ran
 In the rear of his load of potatoes.
“Six dollars, and health, and a hand-cart!” said he ;
“Oh, who in the city can wealthier be!—
 ‘*Potatoes ! Oh, Potatoes !*’”

The hush of the morning was stirred by his voice,
And ever till evening he offered a choice
 Of several kinds of potatoes.
“I warrant them sound as a drum!” cried John,
Though this was a hollow comparison!—
 ‘*Potatoes ! Oh, Potatoes !*’”

Nor ever a wife or a child had he ;
Poor fellow! no weight ever lay on his knee
 But a bushel or so of potatoes.

His cart was his wife, and his child, and his friend ;
“To a *family-carriage*,” said he, “I pretend!—
‘*Potatoes ! Oh, Potatoes !*’”

Full certainly Tim was a marvelous man,
And quite a philosopher, too, as he ran
 In the rear of his load of potatoes.
“A pox o’ your logic !” cried moralist John :
“Men soon would decease if they didn’t live on—
 Potatoes ! Oh, Potatoes !”

“An’ talk o’ your ‘Nature’ and ‘Physics’ !” said Tim,
While staring his audience looked at him
 And then at his load of potatoes.
“Ho, ho !” he said, shoving his cart in the pause,
“Isn’t here an effect that’s ahead o’ the cause ?—
 Potatoes ! Oh, Potatoes !”

Not much of a Christian, perhaps, was Tim ;
But often his measure ran over the brim
 As he sold to the poor their potatoes.
“Don’t mind the odd sixpence,” he also would say,
If he saw they were really ill able to pay.
 Potatoes ! Oh, Potatoes !”

The boys loved his coming ; and often they cried,
“Oh, *please!* dear old Tim !”—so he gave them a ride
On the top of his load of potatoes.

The girls loved his coming ;—and one, I know,
Once threw him a kiss ! though *he* called it “a *blow!*”
“*Potatoes ! Oh, Potatoes !*”

Not much of a scholar, perhaps, was he ;
Though seldom he passed in an “*X*” for a “*V*,”
As he paid for a load of potatoes.

“Oh, where is your *grammar!*” cried Timothy John :
“Two tens and a cypher don’t make twenty-one !—
‘*Potatoes ! Oh, Potatoes !*’”

No loud politician was honest old Tim ;
Yet no one could purchase a vote of him
Though they bought his whole load of potatoes.

“I vote for the man I think most of,” said he,
“And *he* wouldn’t offer a bribe to me !—
‘*Potatoes ! Oh, Potatoes !*’”

“My choice is the man,” cried Timothy John,
“Who’ll help push the world’s great hand-cart on !—
And none of your ‘small potatoes.’

The man who could purchase my vote when he would,
Would purchase my liberty, too, if he could!—

‘*Potatoes! Oh, Potatoes!*’’

Full certainly Tim was a marvelous man,
And always a happy one, too, as he ran
In the rear of his load of potatoes.
He sang from a heart overflowing and free,
And never mistrusted *Futurity* he.—

‘*Potatoes! Oh, Potatoes!*’’

But Timothy John, a few harvests ago,
Was noticed as steering unwontedly slow
With his cargo of new potatoes.

“In the Spring,” he would say, “I shall go under
ground;—

The biggest potato the hemisphere round!

‘*Potatoes! Oh, Potatoes!*’’

God grant that if Tim has indeed since found
The Garden where *fruits* are supposed to abound,—

Though never, perhaps, *potatoes*,—

God grant that his voice may be heard on high
In loftier strains than his own old cry,—

‘*Potatoes! Oh, Potatoes!*’’

“I FEEL THAT I KNOW HER.”

I FEEL that I know her—we smile as we meet;
We pass every day in the very same street,—
She hurrying on—heaven only knows where,
And I in pursuit of ambitions of air.

But who she may be, or the place of her home,
Or why through the city forced daily to roam,
Or married or single, a maiden or mother,
I’m sure I don’t know, any more than another.

Her eyes are a tender and beautiful blue;
Her hair is the glossiest, goldenest hue;
Her cheeks are as red as the roses in blow,—
And her heart is the garden, I feel, where they grow.

We never have spoken—we smile and go by;
No greeting we utter—except with the eye:
Thank God she is modest, retiring, and true!—
And I am as modest and innocent too.

Full often I wonder her name and her station;
I've known from the first she is foreign by na-
tion.

Her language—ah me! would that language were
mine!—

The land of her birth is the land of the *Rhine*.

O Germany! land of sweet music and song!
My feet for thy vine-covered terraces long!
With *her* for a guide through thy sun-purpled air,
How gladly my heart would go wandering there!

Some castle enthroned in thy hills there must
be,
That shelter would furnish for her and for me!
Some crag overhanging some vine-embowered vale,
Where beauty might bloom, and where love would
not fail!

Ah me! such a spot it were pleasant to see;
And pleasanter far in its secret to be!.....
But flee—flee! ye castles, and day-dreams so
fair!
'Tis true ye are castles—but castles in air.

To-morrow I'll meet her again ; and her smile
Will lighten life's roadway for many a mile.
That face in my dream, were life's journeying
done,
Would lumine the pathway that leads to the sun !

Ah well ! and that day—it will come at the last.
Our eyes will be dull, and our smiles will have
passed.
And never, perhaps, will our voices be heard,
Nor ever our souls by those accents be stirred.

..... Perchance in the streets that are nigh to
the Throne,
Where the heart will have voice, though the tongue
be unknown,
We each will discern who the other may be,—
I better know her, and she better know me.



LITTLE BOY HARRY.

THOU brave little fellow, so lightsome and free,
O cease, for a moment, thy frolicsome play ;
O little boy Harry ! come close to my knee !—
Come nearer, and listen to what I shall say.

I think of thee often, as last I beheld thee ;
I love to remember thine earnest, young face,—
So tender and winsome, as often I held thee,
Rejoiced at beholding thy manifest grace.

So noble and earnest thy constant expression,
So grandly embodied within thee was Truth,
I gladly would sacrifice every possession
To know that my life was as pure as thy youth !

And when I remember “of such as” my Harry
“Is made up the kingdom of Heaven” above,
No cause have I longer to grieve that I tarry ;—
Already I reign in that kingdom of Love !

O dear little fellow! a blessing be on thee!
God grant thy whole life may be holy as now!
And when the great Future with laurels shall crown
thee,
I pray they may rest on as noble a brow!

Before thee the Future is slowly appearing;—
Though years must elapse ere thy manhood be
nigh:
O little boy Harry! ne'er doubting nor fearing,
Press faithfully on, till life's goal thou descry.

But laugh and be merry while youth thou retainest!
For childhood's glad pleasures will shortly be
gone:
The sterner refrain of thy life yet remainest,
And strength will be needed for conflicts anon.

Before thee the Future as yet is unfolding;
But trials and triumphs will one day be past:
O little boy Harry! thy footsteps upholding,
May heaven and its angels enfold thee at last!

TO MY FRIENDS ACROSS THE MYSTIC.

THREE friends I have, beyond the widening river
Which separates my city home from theirs :
 Wavelets at times roar loudly,
 But still my boat steers proudly ;
And oft when Evening's flambeaux on the hurrying
 current quiver,
I follow where yon faintly flickering Polar radi-
 ance flares.

Downward the Dipper, on my passage frowning,
May strive at times to bar my onward way :
 Yet, with glad illumination,
 Still the brilliant constellation
Beckons onward to the city the wide southern hill-
 slope crowning,—
Yonder strangely silent city that lies nestling by
 the Bay.

Fierce February tides may swash in sadness,
And hurrying ice-floats surge to meet the sea :
 But ice is but liquid solid,
 And its texture aught but stolid
When my sturdy keel, urged onward by prospective
 warmth and gladness,
Crashes boldly towards the beacon on the distant
 snow-clad lea !

5

Or, perchance,—when newly flower-decked, fern-decked, moss-decked,
Yonder uplands turn in Springtime to the sun,
 And across the Mystic's flurry
 Still with flashing oars I hurry,—
Vernal zephyrs from the highlands of old Powder-horn and Prospect
Whisper softly of the Summer in my own heart
 just begun!.....

O my friends!—faithful friends!—whose frequent
 kindness
I perchance may never half or tenth repay :

Gladly I this thought do render
Of Regard full true and tender,—
Lest that Gratitude with warning voice accuse my
soul of blindness,
And I fail on Friendship's altar slightest offering
to display!

BOSTON, 1878.

MEDFORD BELLS.

COLLEGE HILL, EARLY AUTUMN, 1879.

1.

LOUD on the murky mid-day air
The Medford bells are ringing.
Bold is the verberant rhyme they blare,
Dull is the threnody wild they dare,
Doubts to my glad heart bringing.

Dun are the meadows!—in the sky
Thick clouds of leaves are whirling!
Sturdiest friendships swiftly fly;
Æons and ages are passing by,
Depths into darkness hurling!

II.

CALM on the cendent evening air
The Medford bells are ringing.
Mild is the musical chime they bear,
Gladly their sibilant song I share,
Peace to my sad heart bringing.

Ah! of what matter browning fields!
What matter flowers that wither!
Brighter-far blossoms Wisdom yields;
Stronger-far sceptre Virtue wields;—
Come! let us wander thither!

“TO-DAY THE WINDS OF MARCH
ARE WILD.”

[WINTHROP, MARCH 27, 1881.]

To-day the winds of March are wild.
The swallows huddle 'neath the shore ;
Their wings are still—they cannot fly.
But yonder, whirled about the sky,
The gulls are circling, o'er and o'er.
The gull is Ocean's passive child.

The winds of Fate adversely blow.
My friends and fellows do not sing ;
They sing but when the waves are calm.
I look not always for the palm,
I take what laurels Fate may bring.
With cypress crowned sometimes I go.

DAFFODILS.

INSCRIBED TO T—— W—— L——.

WITHIN the winding woodland aisles
Which stately crown our Stoneham hills,
A myriad wilding daffodils
Bloom gladly where the sunbeam smiles.

How they in such unwonted earth
Found home and blossomed, none may know ;
But buds of a more beauteous glow,
Ne'er, out of poet's brain, had birth.

Anigh their vernal, mossy bed,
The pine stands whispering to the spruce ;
The stripèd squirrel—gay recluse !—
Swings in the branches overhead.

Around their prize the wondering bees,
To such soft sweetness all unused,
Buzzingly gather till infused
With honey of Hesperides!

Thither the Naiads also come ;
Thither the fairies fly in haste :
Never more humble courtiers graced
A Beauty's court in christendom.

Even the lady-ferns and sedges,
Turning in sweet surprise to greet
The beauty nestling at their feet,
Give the pale strangers welcome pledges.

Thither I, too, my steps retrace,
Seeking the inspiration there ;
Meeting within that charmèd air
A benediction face to face.

Wearily, wearily my feet
Were wandering 'mid the fern-clad hills : —

What if for me the daffodils
Had ne'er unveiled their faces sweet!

I drew anigh them as the gloom
Of evening clad the hills with gray,
And all the darkness of my way
Grew glorious with their early bloom.

O friend!—*my* friend, though ne'er thy voice
To me a syllable hath said!.....
Forgive if I unbidden tread
Where thou hast called me to rejoice.

Adown the Campus merrily,—
Myself unseen,—I saw thee go!—
Saw the exuberant overflow
Of the young life embound in thee.

The glow thy vermeil cheek which fired;
The music of thy merry laugh;—

Nor sordid gold had given half
The benediction these inspired!

Around thee breathed the morning air;
The grass was springing at thy feet;
A robin from his green retreat
Chanted for thee a cheery prayer.

The sighing pine for thee would sing!
The murmuring breeze for thee be calm!—
Deem it not strange a lowly psalm
I humbly to thy altar bring!

Wearily, wearily my feet
Were wandering in the Valley of Doubt:
Thou spake!—in chaos Light gleamed out!
Darkness thenceforth was obsolete.

I drew anigh thee as the gloom
Of Sorrow clad Life's hills with gray,
And all the darkness of my way
Grew glorious with thy early bloom.

What if it had been missed by me?—
The vision of thy fair young face!
What if my bonds thy buoyant grace
Had ne'er unbound and set me free!.....

To me henceforth, through life, as now,
Sacred the spot where thou didst stand!
Sacred the pressure of thy hand
Invisible upon my brow!

Sacred the spot where thou didst stand!—
Thither the angels frequent fly,
Angels like those that met the eye
Of Jacob in a foreign land.

Thither I, too, my steps retrace,
Seeking the inspiration there;
Meeting within that charmèd air
A benédiction face to face.

THE BELLS OF COMO.

[Read before the Zetagathean Society* of Tufts College Divinity School, at its Seventh Literary Anniversary, May 26, 1881.]

* "Zetagathean Society,"—*The Society seeking Good.*

IN Italy beyond the sea,—
Dim, mediæval Italy,—
When she, whose ancient power and pride
Had been for centuries thrown aside,
Was slowly waking from her sleep ;
And with the inspiration deep
And ardor of a second birth,
Among the nations of the earth
Was taking precedence and place ;—
When all the Cæsar-line was dust,
And nothing but decay and rust
Remained of the Imperial race ;

And a new line of kings had come,
Immortal throughout christendom,—
Dante and Michael Angelo,
And Petrarch and Boccaccio ;—
When she, so long the nations' scoff,
Had risen and flung her languor off,
And, waking, had betrayed her skill
In marble, and her power to thrill
And captivate with harmony
A waiting, rapt humanity ;—
In Italy beyond the sea,
Dim, early modern Italy,
Was born one day a little child,—
A little weakling! as if he,
For whom was meant a destiny
Amazing, luring, mocking, wild,
Blissful at times, at times severe,—
Humble, exalted, mild, austere,—
Had been by Nature sent to be
Even in birth an epitome
Of all the dread, magnificent,
Vain-glorious accomplishment
Of his own native monarchy.

He was a marvel of a child,
His mother thought—the neighbors knew ;
For often, as he lay, he smiled ;
And closing his clear eyes of blue,
Would bend his ear as if he caught
Some echo of angelic thought,—
The murmur of rhythmic melody,
A strain of heavenly harmony.

When out of babyhood he passed,
And grew in stature,—and at last
Had come to boyhood,—all his art,
Untried, imperfect, yet in part
Revealing what was in his heart,
Was raptly exercised to bring
From brass, from iron, from everything
That answered with melodious ring
When he should touch it, such a tone
As always, when he was alone,
Seemed ringing in the air around,—
The song still present, and the sound,
Which once, when he a baby lay,
The angels sang to him each day.

And as he labored still, apart,
And leaned to listen,—and on wings
Of eager wishes would ascend
Where yonder anthems seemed to blend,
Echoing without hush or end,—
His mother wondered at these things,
And pondered them within her heart.

“What is it, Michael?” she one day
Entreated,—“Tell me your desire!
Your eyes are radiant with a fire
Like that on Como when the sun
Is setting and the day is done.
What is it! tell it me, I pray!”
But Michael only turned away.
He had no words, no heart, to say,
Unto his mother even, as yet,
The longing that was in his soul—
The wish not yet in his control.
But as he turned, his eyes were wet!
For even then there seemed to rise
The ever-swelling harmony,
The far-off angel melody,
Filling the blue ethereal skies

With sweetest notes, as if to wound
His spirit with ideal sound.

Swiftly the months and seasons ran,—
The youth still musing,—till one day,
With something of a wild dismay,
He woke and found himself a man.
His thought, his toil, his frequent prayer,
Had brought no laurel to his side ;
His soul was still unsatisfied,
His chimes were still but in the air.

His chimes ! For it was Michael's aim,
In manhood as in youth the same,—
His one endeavor,—to create
So marvelous a chime of bells,
So fair and void of parallels,
That they the soul would captivate,
And a delighted world would own
The music of their silver tone.

“Some brotherhood of friars,” said he,
“Some convent here in Italy,
Will gladly purchase them of me !

Through all the world their fame will flow,
And pilgrims here will come and go;
And honor will be mine, and I
Will build me here a cottage fair,
And on the morn and evening air,
Ascending hither, fleeing there,
Will hear their music till I die."

No jangling chimes like those that rung
Throughout the vale where Como lay,
When knelt the brotherhood to pray,
Would Michael make! but on the day
When first his silvery bells were swung,
The monks and friars should all confess—
Not sins alone and idleness—
But that their prayers before had known
No inspiration like the tone
That echoed from the belfry-throne
Where Michael's chimes had gained access!
Surpassed their music should not be
By any flute of Arcady,
Or any Hebrew timbrel old,
Or any fabled Harp of Gold,
Or any violin whose fame

Had given to its maker's name
A lustre more than marvelous,—
A halo such as still adheres
To him who wrote upon his work
A name which through the deathless years
In Music's memory will lurk,—
“Antonio Stradivarius.”

For years, in secret, Michael strove,
Untiring, in a little grove,
Casting and tuning still, anew,
The metal cups from which he drew
His hope of honor, wealth, and fame.
Alike to him were praise and blame,
Coming from those who nothing knew
Of his intention or his aim.
Baffled a myriad times, again
Untiringly he toiled; and when
With fleeing years his faith grew dim,
Again the angels came to him.

And so he strove—nor strove in vain:
For in the end his patient pain
Accomplished all his heart's desire.

He labored with his soul on fire ;
And catching from the angels' song
The melody he missed so long,
He tuned in ecstasy sublime
The clanging bells to perfect chime ;
Until they rang a silver tone,
The echo of the angels' own.

A week now hardly passed away,
Whēn on the artist, pleased and proud,
There called with offer rich and rare
A neighboring friar of orders gray ;
Who, having blest himself, and bowed,
And laid his hand on Michael's hair,
“I come, my brother,”—so he spake,—
“For this your masterpiece to make
With earnest prayer the prior's request.
We offer you a price, and take,
With eager thankfulness confessed,
And many a benediction rich,
The wondrous metal marvels, which,
By holy Mother Mary blest,
Aided by tireless prayer and thought,
The cunning of your hands has wrought.”

This the beginning was. The rest,
Just as he long had dreamed it all,
Now came to Michael, with such speed
That in a month his cottage wall,—
Carrara covered, tiled and tall,—
Had risen on the margin wide
Of beautiful blue Como's side ;
And he from toil and want was freed !

At morning now, at noon and night,
In rapture at his cottage door,
Sheltered from summer heat and light
By clustering vine and sycamore,
Entranced did Michael daily sit,
Intently waiting the joyful peal,
The anthem glad and glorious,
Which from the convent on the height
That rose his homestead opposite
Announced the inmates' hour to kneel—
Betrayed, with sudden and loud appeal,
Of pious intent their overplus—
Or sounded the holy Angelus.

Diviner melody than these

No chimes in all the world could ring;
To all who harkened, heavenly ease,
And pardon, such as angels sing
When mortals fall upon their knees,
Their notes seraphic seemed to bring.
To Michael's thought the blest retreat
Of Eden had no music higher.
Not fabled Orpheus' golden lyre
Had ever sounded half so sweet.
And if at favored Michael's feet
Nor rock nor forest bowed and sang,
His soul was often glorified
With a triumphant, joyful pride
Which Orpheus never knew or dreamed:
For when at morn or eventide
His chimes their silver music rang,
To him—ah! then to him it seemed
The waiting angels circled low,
And caught and raised the echo high,
And flung it over hill and glen;
And when the anthem ceased to flow,
Upbore it with them to the sky,
And closed it with a sweet Amen.

But now throughout the peaceful vale,
Along the placid lakelet's marge,
The storm of war, its iron hail,
The beat of angry foreign flail,
The clash of feudal spear and targe,
Came suddenly and awfully.

As when, from out a summer sky,
Where flakes of fairest amber hue
Against a ground of gold and blue
All day have floated gorgeously,
There leaps a sudden awful flash,
The lightning's angry augury ;
And with a quick, tumultuous crash
The thunder follows, and the pale
Blue zenith thickens with the charge
Of cloudy cohorts ; and the large
And sturdy oak,—which hitherto,
Whatever stormy tempest blew,
Had towered unsmitten,—when the hail
And whirlwind and the furious blow
Have ceased, lies shattered, rootless, low,
All lifeless ; so throughout the vale
Of Como, and through all the land,

There came the storm of war; and so,
When turmoil met its overthrow,
And the red, desolating brand
Had fallen from the invading hand,
And Michael again reached his home
From fighting in the ranks of Rome,
No stone above another stood
Where once his hard-earned habitude
Had reared its modest tower and dome.
The grove, where he for years had toiled,
The torch had ruthlessly despoiled.
And more calamitous than all,
Gone was the monkish brotherhood!
And erst where cell and cloister stood,
And prayer reëchoed, wall to wall,—
Now wrapped in winding-sheet and pall,
The convent in a ruined heap
Of ashes lay upon the steep.
And Michael's bells! his masterpiece!
His peerless, his unrivaled bells,
Whose chimes were never more to cease!
The mocking mob of infidels
Had stolen them away, and left
Their maker mournful and bereft.

The light was taken from his eyes;
The gate was shut on Paradise.

“Alas!” he murmured. “Woe is me!
My cup, for all futurity,
Is filled with misery to the brim!”
What now indeed remained for him?
His home, his family, his health
For labor, and his little wealth,
These all were gone!—And even the sound
That once had echoed in the air,
Luring him upward from the ground
With melody beyond compare,—
Sounding from heavenly citadels,—
This too had vanished with his bells.

Or so it seemed to him at first.
For afterwards, as he one day
Was kneeling on the ground to pray,—
The ruined ground, where he of yore
Had sat beside his cottage door!—
Upon his ear a sudden burst
Of the old melody on high
Rang rapturously. And from the sky

A voice angelic, clear and loud,
Came searchingly. "No more delay!
Up, Michael! up!" it seemed to say;
"Why stand ye here, with forehead bowed
And footsteps idle? Follow on!
Somewhere your bells their joyful tone
Are ringing even now! Be gone!
Seek them afar, and claim your own!"

So Michael rose! nor stayed an hour.
New hope was in his heart; and power
To journey, did the need require,
From the blue skies and silver seas
Of his own Temperate Italy,
To where the Tropic's flaming sky
Unrolled its canopy of fire,
Or where the desolate Arctic breeze
Blew cold above the mountains drear
Of the waste northern hemisphere.
So seized he in that selfsame hour
His cloak and staff and shallow purse,
Intent in every hall and tower,
And every hamlet, to rehearse

The history of his stolen bells—
The fair and void of parallels!

Steadfast he wandered here and there,
Seeking his darlings everywhere.
And not alone in Italy,
Beneath his native skies of blue,
But where the Jura mountains threw
Their shadows on Geneva's sea.
Not up and down the Alps alone,
And through and through the Appennine,
But where the Danube and the Rhine
Upreared their convent-towers of stone.
Who knew but here perchance his bells
Rang out in grief their stolen tone!
“Who knows,” he cried, “but here there dwells
A respite for my grief and pain,
And here my ears, so weary grown,
Shall ring with harmony again!”
But when he heard the clang and roar
That echoed up and down the slopes,
Sounding from many a convent-shrine,
Vanished again were all his hopes.

“Alack!” he sighed, “they are not mine!”
His bells revealed their secret lore
In heavenly harmony! but these,
What ear could deem their notes divine,
Or call their anthems melodies!

The seasons went, and came; and went,
And came again: and still his way,
Across and through the continent,
Untiringly, day after day,
Michael pursued, through cold and heat.
Ten,—twenty,—thirty years his feet
Onward unceasingly were bent!
Far to the East his steps were turned,—
To where, on priest-fed altars, burned
Unfading fire; and to the shrine
Of Bethlehem in Palestine.
Even through India and Cathay
His search unfaltering he made.
No distance could his zeal evade.
His chimes seemed never far away:
On mountain, o'er the desert sand,
On lake, on river, on the land,

Ever they sounded loud and clear,
Ringing triumphant in his ear.
His form was bent, his beard was gray,
His wrinkled face was bronzed and burned ;
But as a traveler in the night,
Groping, and waiting for the light,
Yet walking still,—so Michael turned,
And waited for the coming day.

It was in Greece, at last, that news
Arrived to Michael of his bells—
Amid the towers and citadels
Of Athens, where, to pray and muse,
And stray an hour, and lean upon
The ruins of the Parthenon,
Had come at length his weary feet.
A traveler here he met, replete
With stories wonderful, who said :
“Somewhere in yonder Western Seas
I heard their marvelous melodies ! ”
But where, he could not say ;—for dead,
Now, in his memory, the ground
Where he had listened to their sound.

But Michael had at least a cue;
And hurrying to Italy,
His way he purposed to pursue
Along the borders of the sea,
Through all the countries of the West,
And there, God willing, end his quest.

In a few days his feet had come
To buried Herculaneum;
And when he saw the mountain's brim,
Piercing the cloud-rack over him,—
Gazing as with defiant air
Upon the wasted cities there,—
On Michael's burning heart the tears
Fell thick and fast for wasted years;
As on Vesuvius' burning height
The rain fell hissing in the night.

Then north, to the unblest estate
Where ancient Rome sat desolate,—
Discrowned, like Lear, by daughters she
Had pampered in prosperity.
And there in Rome, at last! he heard

The story he so long had sought.
He met a mariner, who brought
The grateful, long-expected word,
That yonder on the sun-lit shore
Of Erin there were silver bells,
So fair and void of parallels,
That he who heard would fain implore
That he might hear them evermore.

A month went by. A little bark
Was moored on Shannon's placid tide.
A boat was pushing from her side ;
And o'er the silver wave the dark
Fantastic turret of St. Mary's lay,
Far-shadowed by the dropping day.

Kneeling within the little boat,
His streaming eyes upon the tower,
Was Michael!—Happy, happy hour!
“O bells !” he cried,—“one marvelous note!
Long have I toiled and sought for thee!
Ring out! ring out, and welcome me!
Ring at the setting of the sun!
Ring! and my pilgrimage is done !”

The answer came! A silvery shower
Burst from the old cathedral tower!
A smile illumed the wanderer's face:
His heart sang inward jubilee.
The bells were his! and time nor place
Had marred or dulled their melody.

But Michael! When the rowers sought
To take in theirs his withered hand,
And rouse him, as they neared the land,
They did his guardian-angels wrong!
His soul the seraph-hosts had caught,
And borne it upward with the song!
The melody was Michael's knell—
The anthem was his passing-bell!

And now, my brothers! at whose word
Of cordial welcome and command
I come again a little while
To greet you and to take your hand,

And meet your well-remembered smile,
And read to you, in simple phrase,
In memory of other days,
This verse of mine!—Your kindly word
To come to you I gladly heard;
Though deeming I had little right
The place or power to emulate
Of those who on a loftier height,
Beholding more seraphic light,
Have power the heart to captivate.
The silvery phrase which Sidney knew,
The golden light which Milton drew
With cunning hand across his verse,
My pen indeed may not rehearse,
Nor in its highest ecstasy
Attain the sweet simplicity
Of Bryant's or of Wordsworth's art:
But pondering as best I might
A song to touch the thinking heart,
And questioning what land, what date,
What freak of Fortune or of Fate,
What winter gloom or summer light
I best might open to your sight,

O brothers, I have brought you this!
And though indeed the gleam you miss
Which other hand had made more bright,
To you this Legend Beautiful,
Of patience under painful rule,
Of innocence as white as wool,
Of eager wandering to regain
Surcease of weariness of brain,
And finding only death and pain,—
To you this legend I relate,
To you this tale I dedicate.

Ye are the Seekers after Good!
On earth ye have no habitude.
Your lives ye dedicate in youth
To painful, long, unending search,—
And in the portals of the Church
Seek Knowledge and Eternal Truth!
To-day, of Truth perchance the prize
Ye think ye hold before your eyes.
Through care, and toil, and anxious thought,
The melody ye long have sought
Seems ringing in the sun-lit air;

And ye are confident, forsooth,
And "Thus and so," ye say, "is 'Truth'!"

What shall I say to you?— Beware?
Clasp not with fervor to your soul
A dream so flattering? so unreal?.....
I would not mock your glad appeal!
Far rather would my hand unroll,
If such were possible, a scroll
On which were written, "Yea! your search
Has led you to the one true church!
Your dream—it is indeed The Truth,
And ye are conquerors ev'n in youth!"

Alas! we know not where it lies!
It is not ours with seraph's eyes
To pierce God's hidden destinies!
We seek, we knock, we vainly call,
Like Pilate in the council-hall.
And still the Christ no answer makes!—
And still the rabble comes, and takes,
And carries him without the wall!

What then? Shall we forbear our toil?
Blow out our lamp? neglect the oil?
Repose on some Calypso-beach,
Or to the hall of Circe flee?
Heaven lies not far beyond our reach:
We almost hear its melody.
A messenger has shown the way;
We heed, we follow on To Know.
But only when, like Michael, we
Are met by angels, and the glow
And glamour of the life below
Is merged in the resplendent ray
And beauty of the Heavenly Day,
Will the sweet Truth we long have sought
Unto our waiting souls be brought.



MOTHER AND SON.

IN the heart of a city of wealth untold,
In the heart of a city with wealth grown cold,

A Woman, with weary heart and brain,
Bowed trembling beneath a load of pain.

The firelight danced on her darkened wall:
But it danced in figures tragical.

A beam from the occident sun shone in:
But it gleamed with the flash of a javelin.

The man she had loved,—whose home had been
hers,—
Was lying to-day 'mid the sepulchres!.....

With eager embrace, in her desolate grief,
The babe at her breast gave a glad relief:

“Oh wait, my soul!” On her startled sight
A gleam from the Future flashed clear and bright.

“Oh wait! till my boy perchance shall grow
To realize what he so soon must know:

“He then in my heart shall fill the void
Left desolate by hopes destroyed!”

—The years swept past; and with turbulent tread:
Yet Hope still lingered, nor Faith grew dead.

The mother, with earnest heart and smile,
Toiled alway, and sang at her toil the while.

Earnest she labored from week to week;
And hardly she kept the bloom in her cheek.

The race was long, the burden was hard;
But onward she struggled, nor sought reward.

Her bright little boy, now five years old,
Was growing in graces manifold.

If his body was little, his heart was big;
And his thought could go light over many a league.

He oft at her side her labor condoled,
And listened to many a tale she told.

The light of her love in her eye shone clear;
For her heart was a fountain of love and cheer:

And a prayer for her darling, with every word,
Went up to a Throne where prayer is heard.

With a smile and a tear the eye of the boy
Oft flashed on his mother an answer of joy.

His quivering lip in expectancy lay;—
For the end of each story himself could say:

A kiss and embrace, a caress and a smile,
And rapture in perfect fruition the while!

His eyes wore a look that a limner might give
To a Babe in a Manger—contemplative,

And full of the wonder that filled the thought
Of Christ when he saw what the Magi brought.

A flash of the Future oft flits o'er his face,
As he ponders the proverbs her sweet lips trace;

And his heart, with never a shadow of pain,
Cries "Wait, my dear mother,—until I am ten!"

"The labor my father for thee had begun,
Completed shall be by the hand of his son.

"Oh wait! and the love which so truly is mine,
Returned with rich interest shall be thine!"

—Full swift is the pace Time's chariot drives!
The boy at the age of his wish arrives:

But ah! though his heart is willing and large,
He cannot yet stagger 'neath helmet and targe.

Again he beseeches,—his tears between,—
"O wait, my dear mother!—I soon am fifteen!"

“The hands which now are so slender and thin
Will soon be grown stouter, and stronger of skin.

“The heart of a man, if in garb of a boy,
Is deemed by the world too untried to employ!

“But fast I am growing in size and in strength,
And the world shall acknowledge its wrong at
length!”

His eyes wore a look that a limner might give
To a Christ in the desert—full sensitive;

And full of the wonder that filled the eyes
Of Christ when he pondered earth’s apathies.

“Hope ever! the love which has long been mine,
Returned with rich interest shall be thine!”

— Again fly the years: the hour is nigh!
But again there rises the selfsame cry,—

“Oh wait, my dear mother!—if wait you can!—
For what I have promised,—until I’m a man!

“Have patience! the love which has long been
mine,
Returned with rich interest shall be thine.

“With riches, with honor, with home, will I
Thy slightest expression of want supply.

“Men look with disdain on my aims and my
hopes;
And steep are life’s mountain and hill-side slopes:

“But ever a beacon still beckons me on:—
The faith of a father fulfilled in a son!

“Have patience! the love which has long been
mine,
Returned with rich interest shall be thine.”

His brow wore a look—ah! had limner but
known!—
Of a Christ in a Multitude walking alone;

And full of the wonder that filled the gaze
Of Christ meeting scorn when he asked not for
praise.

And ah! how the years roll on apace!
And oh, how rapidly grows the trace

On the brow of the mother, of want and woe;
And how bitter the pangs of poverty grow!

The child has at last arisen a man:
But the struggle is hard for bread—for bran!

And his promised bestowal of honor and pelf—
Has shrunk to a battle for bread for himself!

The woman toils on;—as for twenty years
She already has done through hopes and fears.

But her heart is wondering, “Where is the end?”
Though the man cries, “Surely it must amend!

“O wait, my dear mother!—if wait you can!—
No toil ever ended ere yet it began!

“Have patience! the love which has long been
mine,
Returned with rich interest shall be thine.

“No promise than this I am able to give ;
For life, I have found, is but toiling to live !

“But wait, my dear mother!—the future yet
May garlands of roses and laurel beget !”

His brow wore a look that a limner might crave :
Of unmerited obloquy patient and brave ;

Eyes full of the sadness a life of woe
Had graven the Nazarene’s brow below ;

And full of the pain that earth’s infamy
Made once to o’erflow in Gethsemane.

“But wait, my dear mother!—the future yet
May garlands of roses and laurel beget !”

—So years wung on—and the laurel came !.....
But it bloomed on a grave without stone or name.

In its arms of earth the grave holds fast
The remains of lives and hopes long past.

The mother and son together are laid:
Their struggle for life has at last been stayed.

Bravely they acted their wearisome part,
The world looking on without thought or heart.

Perchance in a different world and sphere
A wealth they enjoy which they never had here.

Perchance in its arms the grave holds not
Aught but the shame which should be forgot!

In a sphere beyond this world of Time,
Their lives perchance may be sublime.

—Ah well! to us all, vain hopes arise,
And float, mere phantoms, before our eyes.

How oft is our wail, “O wait, my soul,
And Love shall be thine as the seasons roll!”

And ever the years sound back the cry,—
“No city we have but is built on high!”

Not in this world—ah no! not here
Is the glad fruition of hope and fear.

But the life now lived is not Life at all:
It is merely to Life the entrance-hall.

Life is begun, and only begun,
When men with a shudder have called it Done!

In a sphere beyond this world of Time,
Men's lives perchance shall be sublime.*

* "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things,
And likewise Lazarus evil things:
But now he is comforted." —*Luke xvi: 25.*



THE LOVED ONES WHO HAVE LEFT US.

*Tί ζητείτε τον ζωντα μετὰ των νεκρῶν ;
οὐκ ἔστιν ὡδε, ἀλλ᾽ ἡγερθη.*

Luke xxiv, 5.

WHERE are the friends,—the loved ones who have
left us?—

Who outward with the tide,
The while we mourn the fate that hath bereft us,
Have vanished from our side?

Within the dull cold earth, perchance, their bodies ;
Or low beneath the sea :
But Yonder,—upward,—where the light and God
is,
Their souls rest peacefully !

No more among the dead we seek the living !
But thither in the air

We rise on wings of faith, with glad thanksgiving,
And view our loved ones there!

As once of old the Jews on Olive Mountain
With eager, wistful eye
Gazed up to view of life the Lord and Fountain,
And saw Him in the sky,—

So we, with hearts at ease and touched with glad-
ness,
No more bemoan the tomb,
But view it void and empty of its sadness,
Despoiled of death and gloom.

There is no Death! At most there is but parting:
And parted ones may meet!
Life's separated arches, newly starting,
Shall one day stand complete!

No more among the dead we seek the living:
But upward in the air
We rise on wings of faith, with glad thanksgiving,
And view our loved ones there!

What sailor knows, beneath the wave he lies on,
The secrets of the sea?

Who fathoms Time, beyond the dim horizon
That bounds Eternity?

Who knows the depths of the Eternal Spaces?
The course the comets run?

Who knows what light illuminates men's faces
Beyond the moon and sun?

Daily we wonder what they may be doing
In that fair heaven afar:

Nor deem we that their steps are but pursuing
The space from star to star.

Love, labor, progress!—this the constant story
That God in Nature speaks:

Love, labor, progress!—this the tireless glory
Of the Eternal weeks!

“What! know ye not that hitherto my Father
Hath worked, and I too work?”—
No dull Forgetfulness, where angels gather
In yonder Heaven may lurk!

“There will be Light!”—Still sounds the Voice
Eternal.

And aye the Light will be.
New stars, new suns, new satellites supernal
Blaze forth continually.

Whose hands, it may be, clothe the high Sierras
Of those new worlds with white?
Whose kindly fingers dissipate the terrors
Of their Antarctic night?

Invention fails; imagination falters;
We may not read the sky:
But this we know: Anigh the heavenly altars,
Affection cannot die!

They love us still! the beautiful and tender!
Who early, one by one,
Have fled earth’s darkness for supernal splendor,
Earth’s shadows for the sun!

They love us still! and with each swift pulsation
With which they speed the air,

Let fall upon the waiting, wide creation
A wealth of love and prayer.

They know the sad, despairing hour of Sorrow,
That weighs the heart with woe,—
And whisper softly of a sure To-morrow,
When tears shall cease to flow.

They know the pain, the poverty, the parting ;
The dull and aching heart ;
The quivering lip, the tear-drop at its starting ;—
They share of these a part.

They know our sins ! They see in secret places
The hidden lust and pride !—
What wonder if at times they veil their faces,
And turn with tears aside !

They know the weakening hour, the wild temptation ;
They bid Despair revive :
They fight anew the host of hell's legation ;
They save the soul alive.

— O Angel-Sisters! have us in your keeping!
We know ye are not dead!
We know our hearts might hear, were they not
sleeping,
Your pinions overhead!

O Angel-Mothers! beautiful as Morning,
And brighter than the Day!
Our earthly doubts with heavenly grace adorning,
Ye steal our hearts away!

— But on my listening ear the mournful chiming
Of midnight bells doth rise;—
I cease the labored dissonance of rhyming,
And leave you in the skies!

But ah! the separation is but seeming!
I know ye still are there!
I sleep! and on triumphant wing, while dreaming,
I join you in the air!

AN ANSWER.

They know the pain, the poverty, the parting;
The dull and aching heart;
The quivering lip, the tear-drop at its starting:—
They share of these a part.

— *See ante.*

It has by some been asked of me,
“Why thus I wrote?” and “If I meant,—
If measured,—in its full intent,
The thought they deemed a fallacy?”

I would not be misunderstood:
I weighed the words, whate'er I said,
About the dear ones we call dead,
About their influence for good.

It cannot be that those we love,
If knowing all the pain and fear
And sorrow that beset us here,
Are happy, in the home above?

We are not happy when we see
Around us sorrow, pain, and sin?—
The wave that gulfs the sailor in
Gulfs other hearts as hopelessly?

The fever that its heat allays
Only by draining dry the blood,
Drains also dry the feverish flood
That in the watcher's pulses plays?

The crimes that cause the soul to start;
That cause the over wise to see
Depravity's totality
Embound in every human heart;—

Youth's wanton seed, whose ripening grain
Shall grind to bread of tears and groans;
The secret sins that gnaw the bones
And eat the nerves that feed the brain;—

The petty thirst for public place;
The pride of power, the lust of wealth,
That stay at loss of name nor health,
And laugh at laws with wise grimace;—

We are not happy when we see
Around us sorrows, sins, like these?
Alas! nor power himself to please
Had he who walked in Galilee:

Yet looking evil through and through
He saw the good that lay concealed,
The good to others unrevealed,
And in the false beheld the true.

So they, our friends!—(thus runs my dream,)—
Whose vision has been cleared to see,
Behold, where we obscurity,
The things that are, not those which seem.

The breeze that over Calvary blew,
And caught the Sufferer's tender prayer,
Still breathes and echoes in the air,
“Forgive! they know not what they do!”

Who then will say that men should mourn,
And mourn as one without a hope,
When, falling on the upward slope,
They seem like dead leaves downward borne?

Who constant mount are not the men
Who know the nobleness of life ;
But they who beauty learn through strife,
And they who fall to rise again.

With clearer eyes than eyes of earth,
The spirits of our dear ones dead
In these our days discomfited
Behold our other, better birth.

And still my heart would fondly pray,
“ Know me, my sister, know me still !
Know me, dear friend, through good and ill,
Through doubt and dark, to perfect day.”



GONE.

FROM my sleep I start, and gaze without.
What is this load—this load of doubt—
This weight, that presses so hard and deep
Upon my heart that I cannot sleep?
That presses so hard—with such a heat—
That my burning heart will scarcely beat?

Sunk is the star that beckoned me on!
She whom I loved is gone, is gone!

I gaze from my window—I gaze on high :
Coldly the moon slants down the sky—
Cold as the cold and icy weight
That lies in the Valley Desolate—
That lies in the valley of death and gloom
Where earth for its beautiful bride made room.
Sunk is the star that beckoned me on!
She whom I loved is gone, is gone!

Faint on my bed falls the light of stars :
Red at the door of his tent stands Mars—
Red as the lurid light that throws
Vesuvius' shade on Italian snows.
—Faintly it falls on her lowly mound,
And reddens the landscape all around.
Sunk is the star that beckoned me on !
She whom I loved is gone, is gone !

O what to my heart remains of good !
—I mind that when last by her side I stood,
She pointed her finger—she pointed high :
“I die,” she murmured, “yet shall not die ! ”
That finger uplifted I still can see ;
And it beckons, eternally beckons to me.
She whom I loved—ah no ! not gone !
The star that once beckoned still beckons me
on !



A CANE FROM GETHSEMANE.

A SIMPLE cane is here,—a pilgrim staff:
Yet on its polished face,
In quaintly graven Hebrew paragraph,
A sacred name I trace.

“Gethsemane.—Mount Olivet.” The phrase
Bespeaks the favored earth
Where, ages since,—in unremembered days,—
Its sacred tree had birth.

A traveler brought it—fragrant with the air
Of that clear Syrian sky.
“Here, friend,” he said, “the staff is yours; you care
For such things more than I.”

I hold it in my hand, as here I sit,
And musing close my eye:

And far and fast doth subtle Fancy flit,
Imagination fly.

Beneath the swaying bough from which was plucked
The olive cane I hold,
Dark Hebrew boys have played, and, playing, sucked
Its fruit times manifold.

In shorn Gethsemane, even to this day,
Is shown the grotto wild
Where Abraham prepared the wood to slay
Isaac his first-born child.

Here David, harp in hand, from yonder hills
His native Bethlehem nigh,
Oft wandered with his sheep, the rippling rills
And quiet waters by,

And rested, sweeping with his hand the strings
Melodious with praise,—
Laying his head upon these rootlets' rings,
Lit by the sun's last rays!

Here Solomon had come, with timbrels, flutes,
And cymbals clashing loud;
With solemn sackbuts, fifes, and silvery lutes,
In royal garments proud;

With damsels rich in dyes from Tyrian shore;
Playing at games of chance;
Laughing to see upon the leafy floor
The Jewish maidens dance.

Here Philip's son, great Alexander, came,
His hands with slaughter wet,
And bowed himself before the jeweled flame
Of priestly coronet.

The god of Macedon was Mars the Red,
His empire on increase:
The God of Shiloh's olives, overhead,
Here gently whispered, "Peace!"

Here Jesus, Joseph's son, a mightier King,
Weighed down with woes of men,
Came praying he perchance their lives might bring
To God and heaven again.

Here too, while his disciples slept, he sweat
As it were drops of blood;—
His brow, in agony, already wet
With Friday's crimson flood.

And here the angel came, in raiment white,
To strengthen him and bless,
Making a Bethel of the darksome night,
And joy of his distress.

Here Judas, jeering, brought the priestly crowd
With lanterns, swords and staves;—
His thirty silver pieces jingling loud
And murmuring “Paupers’ graves!”

Here Titus came! and with his army vast
Uprooted every tree.
Thy glory then, Jerusalem, was past!
And thine, Gethsemane!

But ere that fatal hour, the cane I hold
Was plucked from off its tree,
And down through monkish cloisters dim and old
At last has come to me.

This very bough, perhaps, its portion gave
For Abraham's altar-fire,
When sadly building—deeming nought could save—
His first-born's funeral-pyre.

This very bough— who knows?—the bough may
be
That sheltered David's lambs ;
Beneath which Solomon, the Wise, in glee
Made puns and epigrams ;

That Alexander bowed beneath ; that he
Of Nazareth sought for prayer ;
That angels' pinions brushed ; that treachery
Sought out and made a snare !

O sacred bough ! from thy long history
Some lesson I would learn !
Would that from thee some heavenly mystery
Within my soul might burn !

KALLIGO.

[See Note at end of volume.]

I. PRELUDE.

IN that wonderful land of the river St. John's,
First known to the Spanish Hidalgos and Dons
Who followed Leone to its flowery coast
In search of new wealth and perpetual youth,
Lie hid in its deserts of tropical growth
Full many a marvel and many a boast.

But not Ocklawaha, that marvelous stream
Whose verdurous banks seem the breath of a
dream,
Nor ancient Magnolia's health-haunted spring,
Nor aught of the forest's perennial bloom,
Might furnish a tale of so sombre a gloom
As that which the Floridan cypresses sing.

I stood on the bounds of a mighty morass;
And round me while glimmered the quivering glass
Of the turbulent waters, there came to my ear
A wail for the lost ones its jungles amid,—
A wail for the desolate ones who are hid
In its innermost recesses year upon year.

From Mexico's gulf, to the northernmost strand
Where booms the Atlantic on Floridan sand,
Is heard from the forest its mournful lament.
Rare blossoms may bloom in the middle-land
maze,
And sunbeams may dance where the pelican
plays,
But naught of its dirge doth the woodland re-
lent.

Perchance in the wilds of the Maranon isle,
Or far in the jungles of Congo or Nile,
Lie phantasies hid which mankind never sees.
But he who would learn of the Floridan's haunt,
Or seek the sonata the cypresses chant,
May hear the weird anthem in every breeze.

II. KALLIGO.

ON the half-submerged edge of the Kalligo Swamp,
Whose tropical gorgeur would rival the pomp
 Of ancient Assyria's purple day,
An aged man, in the garb of the poor,
Stood silently kneeling beside the door
 Of a hut long ruined and gone to decay.

The silver of seventy besprinkled the hair
Of the Florida Cracker—whose simplified air
 Bespoke him of nature as rough and uncouth
As ever a man in the bush may become
When wifeless and childless and lacking a home.
 Yet full in his eye shone the fire of truth.

His form was as bent as the gnarled cypress trunk
Which lay at his feet—like a fugitive monk
 Escaped from its cloister amid the morass.
His brow to the evening breeze lay bare,
And tremblingly murmuring a prayer
 His heart showed clear as a crystal glass.

High over his head, through the cypress boughs
Which stretched o'er the hut where he muttered
his vows,

The on-rushing wind soughed harshly and cold ;
And the wild-hanging mosses, thick fluttering down,
So madly and fierce by the storm were blown
That it seemed some terrible tale they told.

The hut, like the owner, was tottering fast:
Through hardly the oncoming gust could it last
If kind should not blow the encompassing gale.
The mammoth-built chimney stood leaning awry ;—
Propped up by frail timbers which kept it on high
It soon must succumb should the tempest assail.

A back-ground of forest lent shade to the scene,—
A forest the dankest of forests terrene,
And filled with the noisomest vapors and gloom.
Dead trunks and dry branches swayed sighing in
pain,
Enrobed in thick moss as with verdure again ;
Enwrapped as in grave-clothes and waiting the
tomb.



"The hut, like the owner, was tottering fast."

—Page 126.



The giant palmetto and cypress were there,
O'erhung by wild parasites blossoming fair,
And draped with the trumpet-vine's scarlet ar-
ray.

Here petals of purple convolvulus twined;
There picturesque chaplets of white interjoined,
Grotesque in their glory and gorgeously gay.

On many a marvel which Nature discloses
Man's eye never looks, and the daintiest roses
Bloom wild where his footsteps may never have
stirred.

Here blooming and blushing, forever in prime,
Untouched by decay in a century's time,
Were splendors unknown but to reptile and
bird.

Unseen by man's eye, and untouched by his hand,
Lie treasures unnumbered awaiting command,
If only his heart and his will say the word.
With noble realities life is replete:
But he who may seek them with wandering feet
Shall never earth's best benediction have heard.

III.

WILD, wild, through the forests of Kalligo Swamp
The winds in the thickly-hung foliage romp,
And sigh through the groins and the aisles of
the trees.

The snake-bird and buzzard, the vampire and bat
Whirr frightened from branches where croaking they
sat,
Intermingling their cries with the murmuring
breeze.

The waters roll darkly and sullenly back ;
The deadly-toothed moccasin turns in its track
And spits out its venom at rustling leaves.
The Floridan hermit still kneels at his prayer—
His brow to the evening breeze yet bare,
His accents like rustle of whispering sheaves.

High over his head, through the cypress boughs
Which stretched o'er the hut where he muttered
his vows,
The on-rushing wind soughed harshly and cold ;

And the wild-hanging mosses, thick fluttering down,
So madly and fierce by the storm were blown,
That it seemed some terrible tale they told.

But never a thought to the wind's wild wail
Gave the desolate Cracker. With fervency pale
He poured out his soul in so mystic a prayer,
So mournful and strange, so pathetic and weird,
That a listener hearing would doubt what he heard
As a man would doubt music if heard in the
air.

Like cords on his brow purple veins were dis-
tended ;
Long nervously clinched, till his anthem was ended,
His fingers convulsively, tremblingly, twitched.
Weird chorus the elements wailed to his prayer,
And wildly the paroquet screamed in the air,
Its plumage with gold and with green enriched.

O ye of the cities and sunlight! whose years
Have a thought for the lost of far hemispheres!
Whose hearts have a throb for earth's desolate
ones! —

Perchance in the Florida Cracker's lament
Some thought ye may find of increasing content
With temperate skies and less tropical suns.

IV.

“THOU GOD!” Thus the desolate hermit began;—
And call nor entreaty from wearier man
E'er fled from the earth to find voice at the
Throne.

“I fain from my bosom my burden would fling:
But vainly I mourn in my suffering,
And vainly I grope for a Hand in my own!

“Thou knowest that never, for twenty long
years,
Has aught of affection found voice in my ears,
Or wife or a friend had a home in my heart.
My Lucy, she fled from her prison of clay
Full twenty long Summers ere dawn of to-day;
And Harry, my oldest, fell dead from his cart.—

“He drove, down below here, the ferryman’s team,
Transporting such tourists from river to stream
As searched for adventure in swamp and morass.
But one day his horses proved frantic and wild,
And down in the cypress-woods murdered my child
By flinging him fierce on the stone-stubbled grass.

“Men had told me no likelier lad than my Harry
Was known in the country. They said he could
 carry

His head with the highest and noblest if he
Would go with them North to some city or town
Which they mentioned as being a place of renown.—

But Harry, poor boy! to the town preferred *me*.

“They said he was handsome! — Ah, nobody needs
To tell a fond father what he himself heeds
A thousand times better than they—than all
 others!

And if he *was* handsome, that wasn’t the whole:—
For Harry was handsome in heart too, and soul!
And nobler to me than most boys to their
 mothers.

“Just twenty he was, when they killed him—those horses!

And tender and trusting as if all the forces

Of Nature for years had been waiting his coming,—
Awaiting his coming, and gladly preparing
Her purest and best, and with him at last sharing
Them all—all the graces she long had been
summing.

“Then Robert—poor Robert! Or dead or alive
I never have heard from him since he was five!

Some vagabond stole him away from me—God!
It killed his poor mother—my Lucy, my wife.
She was weakly before, and this ended her life.
She lingered a year or two—yonder’s her sod.

“If Robert’s alive now, he’s thirty, poor boy!.....
Perhaps it was well for him!.....little of joy
Or of happiness he would have known here with
me!

I hope he’s a man who would scorn to do wrong—
Not thoughtless, and hurried away with the throng.
Perhaps he’s a scholar—a parson, may be!

“I *would* have liked one of my babies to be
Of use in upraising the world a degree!—

His mother and I often talked of it so.

We had heard that a parson was one who in time
Would come to a place they called ‘Heaven,’ and
‘a clime

Where Love reigned,—and we wished our poor
Bobbie might go!

“The parson who chanced at my hovel one day
As down the lagoon he had happened to stray
With friends who were seeking adventure and
mirth,—

That parson, he told of a home in the sky
Where *all*, who were willing, when called on to
die,

Should find the sweet rest they had ne’er found
on earth.

“He spoke of a Father who cared for us all!
Of One who to earth came poor sinners to call
To a feast which He said should in heaven be
spread.

‘Above in the house of my Father,’ said He,
‘Are mansions unnumbered preparing for thee,
Where ne’er shall be hunger, nor darkness, nor
dread.’

“‘No darkness, no dying, but Infinite Good !’—
So ended the minister. Here in the wood
For seventy-odd years I have lived in the dark !
In the dark, O my God ! for these seventy years,
Encompassed by deaths, doubts, and longings and
fears,—
Nor once in the night met a luminous spark !

“For years at a time I have scarce seen a face.
I have heard in the world there is many a place
Where people are living encompassed by joy.
Here ignorance, blindness, despair abound
Through long generations. If Robert has found
A more sun-lit abode, I thank heaven, poor boy !

“The parson seemed happy. His face, like a dream
Of deepest content, was illumined by a gleam
That must have been shot from the heavenly Day

Of which he was herald—a radiant glow!....
But alas! his companions were eager to go,—
They were waiting,—I dared not beseech him
to stay.

“....It was only a day or two back that he
called....

In pain from my hovel to-night I have crawled
To meet him again—for he said he would
come!

He knew I was sick—knew perhaps I would die
In a month or two more—and the gleam in his
eye

Was as kind as my Bobbie's would be if at
home!

“And I thought, when he stood by my side, and
his hand

Held tenderly over my forehead the band
Which he moistened and folded, all fragrant and
cool—

That he looked as my Bobbie would look in his
place!

And I felt a hot something fall full on my face
As he said 'though as scarlet' and 'whiter than
wool.'

".....But he'll not be in time—I am weaker to-
night.....

He said I would meet her again, in the light—
My Lucy!.....and *them*, too, my boys that are
dead!.....

The winds bellow hoarsely—the forest-trees crack.
Robert! Robert! come back to your father! come
back!.....

O God! what is this that my frenzy has said!

".....O Father of Love! from thy throne in the
sky!.....

If one so untutored and simple as I
May hope to partake of the joys of thy Home,
I pray that the peace which thy promise has given
May one day be mine in that infinite Heaven
To which thou hast called us in kindness to
come!"

v.

WILD, wild, through the forests of Kalligo Swamp
The winds in the thickly-hung foliage romp,
And sigh through the groins and the aisles of
the trees.

The Florida Cracker still kneels—but his prayer
At last is complete, and his silvery hair
Falls damp on a forehead bowed low to his
knees!

The winds bellow hoarsely—the forest-trees crack.
The on-swooping tempest—fierce, furious, black—
With the hermit's last words strikes the frailly-
built hut!

He moves not nor struggles—though low at his
feet
With a crash falls the hut in wild ruin com-
plete.....
His eyes on earth's tempests forever are shut.

Away on the wings of the gale blew the dust
Upraised by the wind in the lumber and rust.

And away on the wings of fair spirits out-
spread,
To the limitless realms of the ocean of air,
Sped the soul of the Cracker—what voice shall
say where?.....
Sadly, sadly the cypress moaned dirge for the
dead.

VI.

WHEN the sun the next morning, red, lurid, and
hot,
Rose flinging a luminous glare on the spot,
The party of tourists who shortly before
Had called at the place, here again had arrived,—
And with them the one whose kind office had
shrived
(As it proved) the lone Cracker now dead on
the shore.

Through the swamp wildly rushing, they came as
in haste,

Peering anxiously, wildly about, through the waste.

“O my father! my father!” the minister cried.—
It was Robert! the Cracker’s son Robert in-
deed.

“O my, father!—too late have I come for thy
need?

Would God, O my father, for thee I had died!”

In the swamp he had met with a stranger, who
said,—

“You are Robert. Your father has mourned you
as dead.

When a boy you were stolen away to the
North.”

Though the storm had impeded—back, back
through the brake,

Through the swamp, to the hut on the edge of
the lake,

The son hastened quickly. But life had gone
forth.

VII.

WITH the dawn of the morning the tempest had
ceased.

In a plot of fair lawn, with its head to the
east,—

Where the sun first should strike when it
rose,—a rude grave

Was dug by the minister's friends for the dead.

And a boat, with sad garlands of cypress o'er-
spread,—

A rude funeral-barge,—bore the corse o'er the
wave ;

O'er the wave, through long watery alleys of
trees ;

Under thick-hanging mosses soft-swung by the
breeze ;—

From the storm-shattered hovel where sorrow
had been,

To the low narrow grave roughly dug in the sod ;—
To the bosom of earth and the bosom of God.
..... And the son returned North, life anew to
begin.

Life anew to begin,—with a weight in his heart :
With a wail in his ears that would never depart—
A wail as of forests when tempests are nigh,
The murmur of waters in madding unrest,
The wraith-mocking rustle, despairing, unblest,
Of wild-hanging mosses fierce-blown to the sky.

VIII.

I STOOD on the bounds of a mighty morass ;
And round me while glimmered the quivering
glass
Of the turbulent waters, there came to my ear

A wail for the lost ones its jungles amid,—
A wail for the desolate ones who are hid
In its innermost recesses year upon year.

From Mexico's gulf, to the northernmost strand
Where booms the Atlantic on Floridan sand,
Is heard from the forest its mournful lament.
Rare blossoms may bloom in the middle-land
 maze,
And sunbeams may dance where the pelican
 plays,
But naught of its dirge doth the woodland re-
 lent.

Perchance in the wilds of the Maranon isle,
Or far in the jungles of Congo or Nile,
Lie phantasies hid which mankind never sees.
But he who would learn of the Floridan's haunt,
Or seek the sonata the cypresses chant,
 May hear the weird anthem in every breeze.

M E T E O R S.

[Originally printed as "*Proem*" to *KALLIGO*.]

I SIT in the gloom
Of my evening room
On the hill-top high, and gaze on the tomb
Of darkness which covers earth's beauty and
bloom.

O'er the river's gray track
Rise the hill-slopes black,—
Like peddlers, each holding a house for a pack,—
Or like Atlas of old, with the town on their
back !

In the Northern sky,
From their throne on high,
Fair meteors flash on the wondering eye,
And fall into darkness, and fail and die :

Fall suddenly down,
With the gleam of a crown,
To fade in the mists and the shadows brown
Which hazily hang over Medford town!

The villagers sleep:
Over valley and steep
Not a household light breaks the darkness deep.—
The pale stars only their vigils keep.

But look! through the night,
(Where a meteor bright
Just vanishing seemed to fall in its flight,)
There shines in a window a warning light!—

A scintillant glare,
Rich, luminous, rare,—
As if when the meteor vanished in air
It charmed a new star into radiance there!

—O soul of mine!
When the Angel Divine

Shall summon thee swift to a region benign—
Shall summon thee swift, and thou follow his sign,

Thou wouldest not ask more
Than some heart on life's shore
Grow bright with a gleam of thy vanishing lore—
Grow bright with a lustre undreamed of before!

SWEET-BRIER ROSES.

I.

ONE morning, at a Poet's door,—
Dark-curtained by a sycamore,—
Came gently knocking
(As of cradle rocking
E'er so lightly on a sanded farm-house floor,)
A fair-haired, thoughtful visitor—a lovely maiden.

As waiting at the door she stood,
Her hands caressed in graceful mood
 A bunch of posies—
 Mostly Sweet-Brier Roses;
By her discovered deep in yonder wood,
And with sweetest summer fragrance redolently
 laden.

II.

“I bring them for the Poet, sir!”
Such the maiden’s accents were;—
 While so surprising
 Were her words, that rising
To his lips the Poet felt no answering stir.
Yet bent he forward, fearful the sweet vision
 losing.

“I bring them, sir,—the first this year,—
In thanks for words of earnest cheer
 By you bespoken!—
 An unworthy token

They may seem, yet sprinkled are they by the
tear
Which joyful fled my eyes the while your verse
perusing."

III.

"Thou maiden fair!" the Bard replied,
As he her grateful offering eyed,—
"No praise e'er dearer
To my heart came nearer
Than these fragrant flowers thy tears have sanc-
tified!
Thine offering I accept with joy of great thanks-
giving.

"One hope to human heart to bring,—
One saddened soul to cause to sing,
However lowly
If in accents holy,—
This is greater crown than ever graced a king.
Methinks for this alone one's life is worth the
living.

IV.

“Emblem of Sympathy, ’tis said,
The Sweet-Brier Rose uplifts its head.—
And for a mortal
To approach the portal
Of the human heart, and, listening, hear a tread
Of sympathy in echo to his own, is greatest glory.

“And so, thou maiden, for these flowers
I thank thee! They in weary hours
Shall oft enchant me,
And their memory haunt me
Like remembrance of the Springtime’s welcome
showers.
Than this thy gift none greater e’er was known in
song or story!”

v.

—O Bard! thou hast not said in vain!—
Than this the maiden’s glad refrain

Thy best endeavor
Could from man nor ever
Call a sweeter, grander, more mellifluous strain.
One soul at least thy songs have led to Faith's
glad fountain !

Nor greater praise e'er Poët had !
Nor gold nor pearls could to it add !—
More blest beatitude
Of answering gratitude
Could ne'er be whispered thee from heart made
glad
Through treading in thy footsteps up the Muses'
Mountain.

1876.



MOONLIGHT ON COLLEGE HILL.

MID-SUMMER, 1879.

THE hour is late:
Borne up by the weight
Of the sun as it sank through its western gate,
The moon, compassionate, calm, sedate,

Has risen in glee
From the eastern sea,—
And now with the stars holds jubilee
On the high wide floor of Immensity.

The light winds soar,
Now higher, now lower:
“Come hither,” they call to me, o'er and o'er,
“And wander with us on the reservoir!”

I wander—and gaze;
And the light wind plays

With the level waters, and shivers the rays
That whirl on the surface like fugitive fays.

The undulant ground
For miles around,—
Rock, river, and valley, and meadow and mound,—
Is lit by the moon with light profound.

Each star-ray stains
A myriad vanes,
And the moonlight gleams on the college panes
Like dew on the grass after summer rains.

The river below
Is white as snow,
And over its tide, as the zephyrs blow,
Broad ripples of silvery frost-work go.

Far down the stream,
With a glow and gleam,
The harbor shines, till its waters seem
Like a jasper wall in a Patmian dream.

There bridges four,
Time-shaken and hoar,
Float trembling above the river's roar,
And fade in the gloom of the farther shore.

There, too, go the ships
Between the slips,
With fire outborne from their blackened lips,
Like dragons in some Apocalypse.

At the foot of the Hill,
White, lonely, and still,—
Its silence reëchoing, wild and shrill,
The wail of the plaintive whip-poor-will,—

The powder-house stands,
O'erlooking the lands
Where Washington toiled with his patriot bands,
And threw up redoubts with his own white hands.

And here is the road
Where the steed once strode,—

The moon still gleaming as then it glowed
Though the tide of a hundred years has flowed,—

On which Paul Revere,
In hope and fear,
Rode sounding aloud in the nation's ear
The knell of the British grenadier!

In my walk I stay,
And the scene survey
With a startled eye! for I hear a sway
As of hurrying hoof-beats far away!

But I listen again:
And my ears attain
No sound but the sudden and sad refrain,
And the patter and splash, of summer rain:

As up from the west,
At the storm's behest,
Dark shadows rise wild o'er the landscape's breast,
Blotting moon, river, harbor, and all the rest!

BODY AND SPIRIT.

OCTOBER, 1881.

THE fair October sky is clear,
The summer haze has fled;
The glory of the woods is near,
The maple's leaves are red.

The cloudless morning sun is mild,
The fern its fragrance yields.
"Come out into the woods, my child,
Come out into the fields!"

"Tis thus I hear my mother speak,—
My mother, Nature dear;
And while her breezes fan my cheek
I linger still to hear.

"These perfect days were never meant
For toil of hand or brain,"—

But made to roam the continent,
Or sail the misty main.

“The world is too much with us,”—Yea,
For all men but a few
Earth’s toil and strain from day to day
Is life’s sole residue!

O God! for what the sun and sky?
For what the leafy wood?
Will men forever live and die,
And call the worse the good?

But ah!—myself—*myself* am bound
Within the city’s moil!
I cannot break, *myself*, the round
Of endless daily toil!

In vain the crimson sumach rears
For me its plumes of red.
And while I toil,—’mid blinding tears,—
The aster’s gold is dead!

Ah well ! my mind is still my own ;
My heart no fetters gyve :
My soul is monarch of a throne
Which through all years shall thrive.

To toil my body Fate may urge —
But unconfined and free
My spirit roams the mountain's verge,
And sails the sun-lit sea.

MYSTIC RIVER.

O MINIATURE river ! winding free
Through widening meadows to wider sea,
Beautiful, beautiful art thou to me !

Men look on thy narrow wave, and laugh!.....
Little they know of the cup I quaff!
And what carest thou for their idle chaff?

Thou art narrow, and sluggish, and muddy oft,
And thy margin is oozy, and low, and soft;
It is no wonder that men have scoffed:

For men are thoughtless, through and through;
And men are idle and sluggish too,
And they laugh at themselves when they laugh
at you.

Thou art wider at times—when the upward tide
Brings a torrent of brine from the ocean's side,
And seaweed and kelp on thy current glide.

Then pleasure-barks on thy surface float;
And fair lips wreath into joyous note
While fair hands hasten each onward boat.

Thou art wider still—when the tide comes in
With a rush and a roar from the sea, and a din
Like that on the beach when the storms begin.

Then over thy wave the sea-gull dips,
And screams to his fellows, while slowly drips
The salt sea-spray from his pinions' tips!

And thou takest thy birth in lakes that are large,
With villages fair on their prosperous marge,—
And yet almost as lone as when swept by the
barge

Of the Indian hunters now lying asleep
Where the willow bends low and the larches weep
On the westering slopes of Walnut steep;—

In lakes that are quiet and calm and still,
Where the bobolink's laugh and the mavis' trill
Reëcho o'er forest and meadow and hill.

But river! if thou in thy breadth wert as great
As the Stream of the South where it pours through
the gate

Of golden Brazil, and runs separate

For leagues in the brine, ever fresh, ever pure;
If thou in precipitous depths didst endure
Dark caverns and cliffs such as oceans immure;

If thou in the circling embrace of thy banks
Held gardens by hundreds, and castles in ranks,
And vineyards like those in the land of the
Frances ;

If thou with Euphrates and Gihon didst run
By the Garden of God, and didst mirror the sun
As when first over Eden the dawn had begun ;—

Ev'n then thou couldst never peace richer impart,
Nor ever be dearer, O stream, in my heart,
Than thou in thy slumber and sluggishness art!

For sacred to me, doubly, trebly, thy tide,
For the friends now far-sundered and scattered
world-wide
With whom in my youth I have walked by thy
side !



BODILY WEARINESS.

[ON MY BIRTHDAY.]

THE sun is in the eastern sky,
But I have journeyed far;
And though not yet the dew is dry
Or pale the morning star,
Already, O my weary feet,
Ye faint for home and rest!
Already, in the morning street,
Ye look with longing west!

Above in yonder ether floats
The waning crescent's gold;
Around me are the plaintive notes
The robins sang of old.
The sun will quench the lunar ray,
The noon will hush the song:

Such borrowed light seems mine to-day,
Such notes to me belong.

I dreamed till now the world was wide;
Its wealth I thought to win.
But rivers roll on every side,
And mountains hem me in.
Like Rasselas, I pine for air;
The valley range is small;
And shallow fissure here or there
Reveals the rocky wall.

I may not in the flesh ascend,—
We have not wings to fly:
But overhead blue arches bend,
The iris spans the sky.
Full soon, full soon, O fainting feet,
Ye pant no more for rest!
To-morrow, in the twilight street,
Ye turn to wander west!

THE VIOLET.

[Written immediately on awaking from a dream during which it seemed to me that I talked with the poet Wordsworth as he was when a young man.]

I MET within the wilding wood
A violet nodding in a dell:
Its bud was blue, its stalk was green;
And now when I would tell
The story of that simple flower
There rises to my view
A perfect picture of the scene,—
The nodding violet's stalk of green,
Its flower of lovely blue.
In all the world were never seen
A bluer blue, a greener green.

I met within the city street
A darling little blue-eyed girl:
Her eye was bright, her step was light,
And on her brow a curl

Of fairest, purest gold hung free.
With smiles she looked at me!
Her heart, dear girl! was light as air,
As free as air from sorrow. There
Could never, surely, be
A step more light, an eye more blue,
A soul more innocent or true.

A few short days—alas! alas!
I met her in the street no more.
I know not how it came to pass,
But knocking at my door
One evening, as I writing sat,
Approached a little boy,—
Her brother,—who beside my knee
Bewailed and wept so piteously,
That it would needs employ
A power beyond my tenderest art
To hush the turbulence of his heart.

I clasped him in my close embrace;
His burning cheeks with tears were wet.
To mine he raised his mournful face,—
Ah! ne'er shall I forget

The hope, the doubt, the keen despair
That mantled in his eye.

“O sir!” I hear him importune,—
“Dear sir! she will be better soon!
Tell me she will not die!”
My heart could not deny the boon:—
“Ah yes!” I said,.....“be better soon.”

— I hastened to the wilding wood,
And sought the violet in the dell,
Whose bud was blue, whose stalk was green.

I hardly need to tell
Upon whose breast, within whose hand,
The flower was shortly seen.
She on its petals looked, and smiled;
Upon the bud of blue, poor child!
And on the stalk of green.
And then she closed her bright blue eyes,
And flew afar to Paradise.

Upon her breast, within her hand,
The violet still was seen,—
The violet with its bud of blue,
Its stalk of brilliant green,—

When in her little grave she lay.
I doubt not when in love
The angels met her, and her eyes
Beheld the blooms of Paradise,
Were none more fair above!
Nor there in heaven might angels view
A soul than hers more pure and true.

"I DREAMED LAST NIGHT I WAS
A BOY."

I DREAMED last night I was a boy!—
A happy, daring boy again!
Sharing the wanderings, the wild joy
Of old companions!—all who now are men.

Perfect the picture seemed to me,—
The wide-roofed house of Gothic build,

“The Island,” and “The old Oak-Tree,”
The widening forest, hare and partridge-filled.

Charlie and Walter, Albert, Frank,—
All were at hand,—and with them, I !
Sporting beside the well, where drank
Many a traveler as he went by.

How well I recognized the hat !
The stripèd trousers, soiled and torn !
Wherein, within my dream, I sat,
And whistled cheerily to greet the morn !

My hair hung white upon my brow :
I felt its tangled flaxen skein.—
'Tis darker, thicker, browner, now ;
But ah ! how soon it may be white again !

We romped, it seemed to me, for hours ;
And then for home ! full boisterous !
Bearing a bunch of wilding flowers
For HER, God bless her ! who was All to us !

The house was large and wide; a wing
Ran out into the orchard-blooms.—
Plenty of space for rollicking
Within those high, wide, memory-sacred rooms!

Upon the table now there stood
A basket of ripe red-cheeked fruit.
Ah no! in city habitude
Such apples ne'er have gratified my suit!

As I their luscious tints recall,
And with them buds and murmuring bees,
Upon my heart there seems to fall
A vision fair—as of Hesperides!

Again I walk the dreamy maze
Where clovers bloom beneath the trees;
And dreams of boyhood's buried days
Recall glad visions of life's earlier ease.

Yet never doth my heart repine,
Or mourn the loss of vanished years.

Still brightly, all along the line,
Some glad aureola of light appears.

I hold it is not true with all
That boyhood's days are happiest:
Faith, Hope and Love ne'er cease to call,
And to the wise each present year is best.

Ah no, my boyhood! back again
I would not call thee if I might.—
Yet, solace for a weary brain!
Thou mayest come back to me in dreams of
night!

Yet ev'n in sleep to me it seemed
The pleasure still was tinged with pain.
So, waking, I thanked God I dreamed,
And rose with joy to manhood's toil again.

BOSTON, 1880.



R H O B E.

PROEM.

THE key-note of the soul,—
Whether of broken heart or whole,
Whether of sinner upon earth
Or saint in heaven ;
Of him of lowly birth,
Or him to whom 'tis given
To unlock the mystery above,—
The key-note of the soul is Love.

Thus is the tale I bring,
Thus is the unrhymed song I sing,
A tale, a symphony of Love :
Though blue waves deep
Roll now where the lovers throve,
And seaweeds shivering weep
Along the strands and islet shores,
While echoing the loud Ocean roars.

PART FIRST.

ON the bosom of a mild and placid river,
On the surface of the Kennebec's slow current,
Slowly floating at the dawning of the morning,
Slowly drifting with the shifting of the waters,
Sailed the jaunty little sloop, the Little Ella.

Happy burden bore the bark o'er the billows,—
Happy bark, such a burden to be bearing!
For the hand upon the helm of the vessel
Was the hand of a maiden rare and lovely,—
Of the maiden called the Queen of all the River.

Lightsome heart is thine own, O merry maiden,
As thou singest in thy sailing o'er the waters!
Happy thoughts are thine own, lovely Rhobe,
As thou thinkest of thy lover over yonder,
As thou singest of his love and adoration!

Shall we listen, Rhobe? shall we hear thine anthem?—
O that ours the madrigal, and we thine Albin!

O that love like thine, that true regard like
Rhobe's,
Had of old enchain'd men's hearts in garlands
golden,
That the world ere this had rightly known what
Love is!

SONG.

“WHEN YOUNG HEARTS LOVE.”

BRIGHT are earth's days, and glad earth's years,
When young hearts love !
Many are joys, and few are fears,
When young hearts love !
Nor aught the wide earth round,
Unto its farthest bound,
May equal the intense
Unswerving vehemence
Of faith, of truth, of innocence, of tears,
When young hearts love !

Glad are the songs the angels sing,
In realms above !
Merry the mock-bird's carolling,
In southern grove !
But ne'er may seraph chant
The Song of Covenant
That bindeth twain in one,
Or bird of southern sun
Repeat the soul's glad triumphing,
When young hearts love !

On the mast the folds of canvas, idly rustling,
Murmured gladly an accompanying music
To the words the maiden's ecstasy had uttered :
Gurgling softly where the boat-keel cut the water,
Ocean's bosom gladly throbbed an answering echo.

Lightsome heart indeed is thine, O merry maiden,
As thou singest in thy sailing o'er the waters !
Happy thoughts in truth are thine, lovely Rhobe,
As thou thinkest of thy lover over yonder,
As thou singest of his love and adoration.

But why sailest thou so early in the morning?
Wherefore driftest thou so aimless on the current?
Whither floatest thou so idly on the waters?—
Look to Eastward! thou shalt see the fair Aurora
Now herself but just arising from the billows!

Hast thou come in all the fullness of thy beauty
To seek conquest o'er the Goddess of the Morn-
ing?—

In thy consciousness of youthful charms and
graces,
Dost thou bring thy truth and innocence and
beauty
To be rivals with the splendors of Aurora?

Needless, Rhobe! more than needless, is thy
coming,

If perchance be these thy thoughts and aspir-
ations!

For Aurora is but servant to thy wishes;—
And ev'n now descends she with her rosy fingers
To inweave glad sunbeams through thy golden
tresses!

Never thoughts so vain as these, however, Rhobe,
Find a lodgment in thy heart's most secret cham-
bers:

For though rare thy beauty, 'tis by thee unthought
of!

And thrice beautiful that maid in others' vision
Who herself of loveliness is all unconscious.

Trebly beautiful, in manhood's estimation,
Is the maiden who to natural adornments
Strives to add true purity and grace of spirit:
Who to loveliness of person and of features
Adds the glory of true womanly devotion!

And moreover, Rhobe, though thy charms were
many,—

Though thy presence far outrivaled Aphroditë
And outshone the splendors of historic Helen,
If thy heart's endeavor were not high and holy
All thine outward semblance would but be as
nothing.

For methinks that high nobility of nature,
And a soul possessed of simplest charms of Virtue,

And a heart oft swayed by Sympathy's emotion,
Are far lovelier, diviner, greatly grander
Than could haughtiest Beauty e'er alone attain to.

—But why sailest thou so early in the morning?
Wherfore driftest thou so aimless on the current?
Whither floatest thou so idly on the waters?—
Look to Eastward! thou shalt see the fair Aurora
Now herself but just arising from the billows!

Turn thine eyes, thou lovely Rhobe, to the Eastward:

Watch the fast declining shadows of the darkness;

Bend thy gaze to yon transparent mass of ether;
Mark the purple-blazoned arches of the Morning;
See the yonder golden gleamings of the sunshine.

Gaze where strikes the growing glare upon the waters;

Watch the gradual lighting up of the horizon;
See where rises yonder rock above the billows;

Mark the shifting, snow-white plumage of the yachtsmen;—

Turn thine eyes, thou lovely Rhobe, to the Eastward!

But the maiden looks nor glances east nor westward;

All the glories of the dawn she counts as nothing!
Rapt and earnest is the phase upon her features,
As of mortals straining eyes to sights celestial:
And a steady gaze of rapture sends she Southward.

Speak, thou modest river maiden,—speak and tell us!

What canst see thou there upon the distant ocean?
Whither pointed is thy look of rare affection?
Where directed is thine eye so true and tender?
Dost thou gaze at sights of earth—or sights of heaven!

Ah, thou Rhobe! 'tis yon high-uplifted light-house!—

'Tis the lofty tower of yonder brilliant beacon
That engages every glance and gaze thou givest!
Yonder islet, on the edge of the Atlantic,
Has for thee far greater charms than fair Aurora!

Blush not, Rhobe! thou art watching for thy
lover!—

Miles beyond thee, down the current of the
river,

At his lonely watch upon the edge of Ocean,
Stands this moment, o'er the billows wide out-
gazing,

One who dearer is to thee than any other.

In that pile of massive masonry high builded,
Stands he there unseen within his lofty tower;—
With his finger on the wick of the great lantern
Waits he for the first bright golden gleam of sun-
shine

Which shall flash above the distant gray horizon!

Well thou knowest this, thou fairy maiden sailor!—
Well thou knowest that at sunrise in the morning,

When the glowing East shall flame with daylight's
coming,

Doth thy lover climb the spiral iron stairway
To extinguish then the radiant lighthouse beacon.

And for this thou sailest early in the morning !
Yea, for this thou driftest aimless on the current
Ere as yet Aurora rises from the billows !—
That, unseen thyself, thou still mayst gaze to
seaward,
And within yon fading beacon-fire discern thy
lover !

O devotion rare and wondrous is the maiden's !
Greater love for lover ne'er had woman, Rhobe,
Than the love thou manifestest for thine Albin.
Rest assured that Angels know thy consecration
And shall bear him on their wings in faithful
keeping !

INTERLUDE.

“ ARE THEY NOT ALL MINISTERING SPIRITS ? ”

OH, the air is full of beings,
Unbeknown to mortal ken ;
And amid Life’s strange decreeings
They are laboring hard for men.

Hither fly they, hither, hither,
Though no mortal eye perceive ;
And their toil, or hither, thither,
Is to comfort souls who grieve.

Ministering spirits are they,
Sent to minister to men ;
And his darkened eyes unbar they
That Heaven’s light may enter in.

Oil of gladness for his mourning
’Tis their mission to bestow,
And, his tattered robes adorning,
Turn the crimson into snow !

Beauty they bestow for ashes,
And a wreathèd laurel hold,
Which 'mid Life's electric flashes
Bids the faltering one "Be bold!"

On their wings they upward bear him,
Lest perchance his steps should slide ;
Oft from hidden danger tear him
Till the threatening sea subside.

In his ear they counsel gladly,
Till his poignant sorrow cease ;
And when waters whirl him madly
Gently whisper words of peace.

Oh, the air is full of beings,
Unbeknown to mortal ken :
And amid Life's strange decreeings
They are laboring hard for men.

Ministering spirits, Rhobe! — they are whispering;
They are whispering in thine ear, and calling,
calling;

They are murmuring of the wild Atlantic's waters;
They are breathing, they are echoing, “Albin!
Albin!” —

And they bear him on their wings in faithful keep-
ing.

— But extinguished now the beacon,— and thy
lover,

To thine eager eye invisible and distant,
Slowly draws the sliding curtains of his lantern
To protect it from the golden glare of morn-
ing,—

To enshield its bright reflectors from the sun-
shine.

Ere descending, stands he motionless a moment,
Raptly gazing on his brightly burnished lantern,
On his fairy-hued, prismatic-tinted darling! —
For reflected in its sympathetic circles
Sees he ever there the mystic gaze of Rhobe!

As he thinks upon the modest river maiden,
As he ponders o'er her faith and true devotion,
Steps he gayly to the massive plated window,—
Flings e'en now a glance of love from out his
eyrie,—
Up the river, up the Kennebec's slow current.

Doth the youthful lighthouse-keeper least imagine
That fair Rhobe sails so early in the morning?—
Is he drawn by any subtile sense magnetic,
Any power profound of marvelous intuition,
To suppose she floats so early on the waters?

Who can answer!—yet along the river's margin
Wide he gazes with a glance of strange emotion:
Gazes upward o'er the Kennebec's wide waters,
Up to yonder cosey cottage in the distance,—
Yonder home where lives the modest river maiden!

Naught however sees he there or recognizes,—
Naught in answer to his gaze of fond affection:
For too indistinct the cottage, and too distant,

And too indistinct the yacht the Little Ella,
To be seen from out the tower of Albin's light-
house.

So without a single gleam of recognition,
And without a single sight of aught familiar
(Save the nearer panorama of the river,
Save the coastline and the wide expanse of
Ocean,)

Draws he once again the curtain of his tower.

And extinguished now the beacon ; and the maid-
en,

From her scene of observation up the river
Had beheld and watched its sudden declination ; —
And in voice of tender faith and true devotion
Did the burden of her thoughts find glad ex-
pression :

“O my Albin ! my belovèd !” cried the maiden ;
“Thou my hope and star of promise for the
future !

I indeed have gladly sailed upon the river,

And have sailed ere yet there came the gleam
of morning,

To behold thy distant presence in the beacon!

“God be with thee in thy solitude, my Albin,
And his angels from the breath of harm preserve
thee!

Be thy voyage o'er life's sea a voyage holy;
Be thy guide the glorious rays of Bethlehem's
starlight;

Be at last the eternal port of Heaven thy haven!

“May the Hand that holds earth's firmament, my
Albin,

And who lights the glittering beacon-fires above
us,

Grant that never, like thy radiant light-house
warning,

Shall thy noble life go out in utter darkness,
Or be spent, ere comes the dawn of the eternal
Morning!

“And my Albin, if perchance thou now mightst
hear me,

List I pray thee to the prayer to Heaven I utter:
That when finally may come to thee the summons
Which shall call thee to the land of the Here-
after,

Not alone thy feet may tread the verge eternal!—

“Separated never, during life’s ascendant;
Separated never, when the grave would part us!
Arm in arm entwined, the when the Bridegroom
calleth;
Heart to heart enchanted, in life’s fast final throb-
bings;
Hand in hand tight held, nor ever more to sun-
der!”

..... And still, upon the bosom of the river,
On the surface of the Kennebec’s slow current,
Slowly floating at the dawning of the morning,
Slowly drifting with the shifting of the waters,
Sailed the jaunty little sloop, the Little Ella.

PART SECOND.

WHILE ablaze above the watery waste of Ocean
Rose the bright-orbed God of Day, the Sun of
 splendor,
Bringing here a new-born life of light and glad-
 ness,
On the world the other side of the horizon
Slow descended the gray shadows of the Evening.

Thus the while in darkness half the earth lies
 sleeping,
And the while in blackness half the earth lies
 groping,
All the rest awakes to joyful songs of labor,
Rises up to seek pursuit of wealth and honor,
Rises up to utter hymns of glad thanksgiving.

And 'tis thus that while a half earth's population
Is content to sit in listless mental shadow
And to creep in paths of moral degradation,

The remainder with a gladsome exultation
Gains the lofty heights of Wisdom's holy mount-
ains!

—Now ablaze along the margin of the river,
All along the pine-clad Kennebec's green edges,
Glowed the tree-tops with the golden glare of
morning,
Glowed the hill-tops with the mellow yellow sun-
shine,
With the purple-tinted radiance of Aurora.

With the rising of the sun above the waters,
With the fleeing of the filmy mists of morning,
Came a steady freshening breeze from up the
Southward:
O'er the surface of the slowly-rippling river
Came a gentle undulation from the Ocean.

Swift the sails of all the ships on the Atlantic,—
All the burdened barks bound home from distant
commerce,

With their heavy laden freights from foreign markets
And their holy wealth of human hearts by hundreds,
Bowed their heads to meet the breezes' benediction.

Swift the sails of all the ships from home departing,—
Ships with products of the field and of the forest,
Ships with golden stores of high-piled Western harvests
For the life and strength and nourishment of nations,
Felt the breeze and bowed their heads to the Atlantic.

Fast the fishing-boats from many a homely harbor,
And the schooners for the Grand Banks of Newfoundland,
And the white-robed yachts of Wealth's gay usurpation,

Felt alike with joy the air's glad ministration,
And to greet the breeze flung out their clouds
of canvas.

[At this point, as the present poem was originally written, were inserted the lines "WHITHER, YE STATELY SHIPS?" found in the earlier pages of this book. In the design of the whole volume, the author deemed it wise to give the stanzas mentioned a separate position. They may, however, if the reader desires, be noted in this connection.]

With the rising of the sun above the waters,
With the fleeing of the filmy mists of morning,
Came a steady freshening breeze from up the
Southward:
O'er the surface of the slowly-rippling river
Came a gentle undulation from the Ocean.

Homeward steering now, and fast the waves o'er-
flying,
Rode the fairy maid, the Queen of all the River:

Far behind her lay the distant lighthouse-beacon,—
Far behind her on the edge of the Atlantic:
And before her rose the island shores of George-
town.

Long and low, and thickly crowned at times with
verdure,
Were the shores where Rhobe steered the Little
Ella:
And anon a gentle hillside, hemlock burdened,
And anon a grassy slope or stretch of meadow
Met her gaze as home she sailed along the river.

Freely dotted 'mid the foliage of the landscape
Fast appeared to her full many a home familiar:
For well-known and highly loved in all the island,
All along the river's varied panorama,
Was the fairy maiden sailor, lovely Rhobe.

Yet nor stayed she now upon her upward journey,
Though assured of honest, earnest, hearty welcome,
To revisit friends or meet their kindly greeting;

Homeward now, to her own father's cosey cottage.
To her household duties, was she fast returning.

As she onward sped, so early, o'er the waters,
The whole earth around seemed filled with peace
and gladness,
And with holiest acclamations of thanksgiving.
As she sailed, she heard from wave and wood
and meadow,
Constant rising, hymns of praise to the Immortal.

The wide earth's inhabitants, with Morn awaking,
Man and beast and bird, alike in joyous transport,
With united song beholding the bright Sun's up-
rising,
And the fleeing of Night's sable shades and
shadows,
Raised with one accord their hymns to the Im-
mortal.

All around her Rhobe heard the songs arising;
All around she heard the symphony of Nature:
In the rippling of the wave and rush of waters,

In the verdant meadows and the sighing zephyrs,
In the rustling woodlands and primeval forests.

In yon distant dooryard, with a din unrivaled,
Rose the crow and cackle of the fowls, and with
them

The reverberating notes of lordly gobblers.
Sheep and lambs amid the hedges playful gam-
boled,
With a tender, plaintive, melancholy bleating.

On their way to pasture the responsive lowing
Of the kine made sober chorus to the neighing
Of the prancing horses. Innocently frisking
In the path, while slow their soberer elders
cropped the
Springing verdure, the young calves made sport
like children.

On the lawn, and 'mid the widening meadow,
loudly,
And anon with delicate reverberation,

Chirped and whirred the cricket; and with whirl
and buzzing
In the air, his flight erratic and uncertain,
Lazily the droning fly drummed on the ceiling.

Far away, upon a distant spruce-top, mocking
With a dolorous cry his young and sprightlier
brethren,—
Cawing with a continuous lamentation,—
Solitary screamed the patriarch crow of George-
town,
Mourning buried days and long past depredations.

A few sea-fowl, soaring high above the river,
Following the current to the edge of Ocean,
Sent to earth a cry of weirdly wild foreboding,—
As expectant of the cruel whirl of waters
Where the gunner's aim should bring them, blind
and bleeding.

Gayly in the trees, or from the wilding thicket,
The red-bosomed pilferer of the ripening cherries

Made the field-bound farmer fair remuneration
For the feast by trilling him a glad "Good-
morrow!"

While a myriad voices echoed, "Glad good-
morrow!"

Thus around her Rhobe heard the songs arising;
All around she heard the symphony of Nature:
In the rippling of the wave and rush of waters,
In the verdant meadows and the sighing zephyrs,
In the rustling woodlands and primeval forests.

[This poem was written very early, being one of the writer's first compositions in verse. In reviewing the manuscript for these pages, after the lapse of the four or five years since its production, the author is led to deem the peculiar versification one of increasing monotony, and much of the narrative itself of inferior interest. Accordingly he has felt it wise to omit, at this point in the story, many pages. The poem was the result of two Summers' personal experience amid the scenes described; and the delightful shores and summits of the Kennebec, the Sheepscot, and their confluent streams, were pictured in the poem at no inconsiderable length. The verses which have already been given (notwithstanding their frequent betrayal of the

author's boyish ardor and inexperience) are sufficiently fresh, it is hoped, and present incidents and scenes of sufficient interest, to repay perusal. Below will be found the conclusion of the poem as it was originally designed. The following brief summary of the intervening portions will enable the reader to resume the narrative intelligently :

Arriving at her island home, Rhobe (the name is pronounced in two syllables) discovers that the early morning has brought to her father's cottage a visitor, in the person of Margie, Albin's sister. Margie comes to invite Rhobe to her own home for a week, where Albin himself is to be for that length of time,—he having happily secured the mentioned respite from his lonely lighthouse labors, through the intervention of a friend who had volunteered to assume his responsible duties during the interval. Early on the following morning the two maidens sail together to the rocky island at the mouth of the river, to bring the brother and lover to his home.

It is during the succeeding week of holidays that the incidents occur, and that the scenes are visited, described in the omitted portions of the poem. Not being necessary to an understanding of the poem's conclusion, no summary of the daily river-excursions is here given.

On the last day of the seven, a little fleet of sail-boats, containing in all a party of twenty or more young people, leaves shore for a day's sail along the coast. In the Little Ella are only Rhobe and her lover, Margie being in another boat. Premonitions of a storm arising, the fleet puts about, in the middle of the afternoon, but is delayed for hours by contrary winds. At nightfall, despairing of reaching the mouth of the river before the rise of the tempest, Albin signals the fleet to enter a nearer harbor, where all arrive safe. Albin himself, however, urged by some premonition of disaster, resolves to push on.

He is accompanied by Rhobe, she having refused to be put on board one of the shore-bound yachts,—if indeed such a transfer to another boat had been possible for her in the rising sea. Darkness now falls, and the storm almost immediately descends with great fury, the boat being many times nearly engulfed. An hour later, rounding after many unsuccessful attempts the point of an intervening island, Albin discovers, to his dismay, that his light is not lit, although the sun has long sunk and the storm is furious. Urged doubly now, the Little Ella, with Albin at the bow as lookout, and with Rhobe at the helm, steers straight for the light. It is at this point in the story that the original verses are resumed.]

PART THIRD.

ONWARD through the darkness, through the spray
fast-flying,
Onward, shivering, trembling, leaping through the
billows,
Onward to the black gigantic bulk before them,
To the foam-enshrouded, rock-surrounded island,
Sped, with storm-sent haste, the sloop the Little
Ella.

Rough the breaking billows here, in calmest weather;
Black these sunken ledges, when the sea is smiling;
Difficult the landing, in the cheeriest daylight:
What shall save the maiden, what shall save the lover,
When upon the shore the surge shall bear the shallop!

Skill shall save, and courage. Well the light-house-keeper
Knows each sunken rock, each sea and shore-ward current;—
Peering o'er the bowsprit, peering through the darkness,
Guided by the waters roaring on the ledges,
Calls he momently to Rhobe, “Port,” or “Starboard.”

To the little stretch of beach piled soft with seaweed,—
To the only stretch of beach on all the island,

Hardly six short boat-lengths wide, and edged
by breakers,—
Through the blinding, hurrying, howling whirl of
waters,
Rhobe steered the little sloop, the Little Ella.

Ah ! the undertow is striving like a giant,—
Like a demon of the sea, with velvet fingers,
With a soft and sinuous touch alluring to him
The light pebbles on the beach and the long
seaweed,—
Then down-dragging them with shriek of terrible
laughter.

And the wind—the wind is howling through the
cordage,
And the sail, though trebly reefed, is torn and
ribboned,
And the boat, careering wildly, dips the current
Till its rail is inches deep beneath the water,—
Till its keel is raised to view of the wild sea-
gulls !

....."Safe!" said Albin, smiling. "Safe!" said Rhobe, leaping

From the shallop to the waiting arms held open;
For the demon of the sea had missed the moment,—

Had hurled high on the soft beach the boat uninjured,

And slunk back with scream of baffled rage and envy.

Up the rocky pathway, now, the lighthouse-keeper,

Stumbling in the darkness over slippery seaweed,
Over loosened stones and timbers, which the storm-wind

In its fury had flung wide athwart the hill-slope,
Hastened with fleet eager footsteps to the tower.

Tying the sloop's hawser first to a huge boulder,
Hastened Rhobe also, after him, to aid him,
Choosing for her upward path a gentler passage
Than the bold precipitous ascent which Albin
In his sturdy might athletic had selected.

Up a narrow winding path o'erhung by beeches,
And by thick dwarfed spruce-trees bordered,
firmly planted

In the niches of high jagged rocks, age-shattered,
Sped the maiden—till, when half way up the
hill-slope,

Suddenly she heard a cry of pain—a moaning.

Oft with wonder, mingled with a tinge of terror,
Had the maiden, in her visits to the island,
Viewed high-towering here a mass of crumbling
granite,

Tipt with shattered pine-trunks,—trembling,—
wide o'er-hanging

All the pathway,—waiting, waiting to plunge
downward.

And the storms had howled about it, and the
whirlwinds

Had encompassed it, and rains had on it fallen,
Till at last—at last it sundered, and in fragments,
While the tempest thundered, broke from its
foundations,—

And across the path now shattered lay and ruined.

And imprisoned underneath the waste and rubbish,—

Struck down suddenly, and caught and held, half buried,

Hours before, in climbing upward from the landing To the granite tower to light and tend the beacon,—

Lay the friend whose kindly aid had favored Albin.

“Haste thee!—wait not, Rhobe!” said he,—for the maiden,

Hearing the faint moan beneath the pile, had spoken,

Asking who was there, and how she in the darkness,

And alone, the best might aid him? And he answered:

“Mind not me! but haste thee, Rhobe,—fire the beacon!”

“Nay, for Albin is at hand,” replied the maiden.
“He is at the tower ev’n now—and ah! thank
Heaven!
Yonder, flashes out this moment, o’er the island,
The bright warning message of the lantern!
Like to
Bethlehem’s starlight be this beacon to the
sailor!”

Then, with ready hand and gentle, Rhobe la-
bored,—
With a rapid skill the fallen man releasing,—
Rolling back the broken boulders and the pine-
trunks
Till he stood beside her, upright, little injured.
From the dead weight of the rocks the trees had
saved him.

So together upward,—on her arm he leaning,—
Strove they through the raging storm to reach
the tower.
All was blackness o’er the wide slope of the
island;

All was hurrying spray and cloud-rack on the waters,

Save where feebly shone the bright track of the lantern.

“A most fearful night!” said Albin, as they met him.

“Ay! a night indeed!” said Walter, while with wonder

Albin listened to his tale, as he recounted How the jutting crag had fallen, and how Rhobe— “Bless her heart heroic!” cried he—had released him.

.....“See how flares the lurid lightning in the offing!

How the roaring, turbid waters are illumined By the sudden zig-zag flashes!” whispered Albin.—

“Gracious God!” he cried. “Yon brig! why comes she hither!

See where heads she for the reef!—what power can save her!

“I must go!” he cried. “See, she is drifting heedless.

There is time—I can sail out and intercept her!
Fools!—nay, nay, the fault is mine! for had the beacon

Been aflame ere yet they drifted near the island—
Had I been upon my post—they had not perished.

“Knowing not the sunken reef to which they hasten,

They lie still, with folded arms, and wait and linger,
Daring not to spread a yard of sail, lest haply
To the very death they fly, to which, unthought of,
While they linger, crying ‘We are safe,’ they hurry!

“I must go!....Nay, Rhobe, with thine eyes beseeching,

Look not thou, my love, so wild at me, remorseful!....

“O my Albin!” cried the maiden. “Wild the waters!

Never from the shore can you succeed in pushing.
And your little boat in such a sea will perish.”

“Ah! but better, Rhobe,—trebly better were it
When calls Duty, sternest voice of God or Nature,
Ev’n to perish, than to fail in the fulfilling!
Bid me go—see! half a hundred souls may
perish:
You and I are two!”.....“Ah God! but if we
sunder!—

“If we sunder,” moaned the maiden, “what is
left me?
Two? nay, *one* are we! one only, and forever!
O my Albin! my belovèd!” cried the maiden;
“If we sunder—if we sunder, what is left me?
But the vessel dies! Go! God be with you,
Albin!”

So he left them. And a moment, while they
listened,
Bending eagerly, they heard his flying footsteps
As he hastened down the rocky seaward terrace.
Then the roar of the wild tempest shook the
tower,
And naught heard they but the long roll of the
breakers.

But the next flash of the lightning, streaming
seaward,
Showed them Albin in his own light life-boat,
rowing,
Toiling outward, with bare mast, to where the
drifting,
Helpless vessel, hid from view in the dense
blackness,
Lay in danger. And they feared to look upon
him.

“O my Albin! my belovèd!” cried the maiden;
“Thou my hope and star of promise for the
future!”
And no word of prayer, no other thought, she
murmured,
Than the sad refrain, “My Albin, O my Albin,
If we sunder—if we sunder, what is left me!”

Then she thought of the swift-coming, happy
Autumn,
When no more through all the long, cold, cruel
Winter

Should the lighthouse-keeper tend the gleaming
lantern—

When they two together, in their own snug cottage
On the mainland, would live warm and calm and
happy.

And her thoughts ran down the coming years,
swift-fleeting,

Which should bring to them prosperity and
children—

Smiling acres, crowned with rich, abundant har-
vests,

And fresh fair young beaming faces, radiant,
golden:

Dreamed she even now she heard their innocent
prattle!

“Ah,—my God! Stand back! stand back!” cried
Walter, seizing

And with stern grasp forcing far-off from the
window

The pale maiden. For a blinding flash—long-
streaming

And intense—had showed him where the little
life-boat,
By a swift wave overturned, floated keel upward!

But the maid escaped him. To the window hastening,
Saw she, as the radiance died, the deed of ruin.
“On the brig they had just sighted him,” cried
Walter,
“And obeying his alarm had veered to South-
ward,—
When the mad wave, hurrying onward, overturned
him.”

“He is safe!” cried Rhobe, watching from the
window
Till another gleam shot far athwart the waters.
“He has risen from the waves, and strongly battling
With the billows gains a hold upon the life-boat,
And is floating now upon the o’erturned shallop.

“But they see him not, nor hear him!” cried the
maiden.
“In the darkness they have fled away and left him!

O my Albin! thou didst risk thy life to save them—
Shall not I—O willingly!—now dare the tempest,
Thee to rescue, in the sloop the Little Ella?"

"Nay,—but Rhobe!" Walter cried, and had detained her:
But she would not listen. "Guard the lantern,
Walter!
See that it burns bright, nor let it ever flicker.
Safe full soon will he and I again together
Come to land—or hand in hand together perish!"

Then she vanished out of sight, and the dull
booming
Of the tempest, and the thunder of the breakers,
And the shriek of the wild waves upon the
pebbles,
And the scream, shrill, sharp and piercing, of the
curlew,
Were the only sounds that met the ear of Walter.

Stood he dazed a moment, speechless. Downward
swooping

With swift pinion,— madly swooping,— screaming,—
calling,—

Dashed three sea-birds, wild, against the alluring
beacon:

Hard against the massive windows: then with
broken,

Shattered pinions, and dull pain-cries, fell they
fainting!

Dimly through the brain of Walter passed a vision.
“Love is a strong beacon,” said he, “and alluring;
And on pinions eager as the hurrying sea-bird,
And as thoughtless of the way, we fly to gain it.
And with shattered plumes and pain-cries fall we
fainting!”

Sadly leaned he, with white face, against the lantern.
Seemed he to grow weak—all strength seemed
ebbing from him.

Blurred and blinded, ev’n with tears, became his
vision.

“Never more,” he groaned, “on the loved face
of Rhobe

Shall I look again, nor on the face of Albin!”

Then he hastened, and adown the spiral stairway,
And adown the hill-slope, followed after Rhobe.

“Bright will burn the lantern,” said he, “till the
morning.

And alone,” he cried, “by no strong arm attended,
She can never launch the sloop the Little Ella!

“I will lend my aid!—and once on board the
shallop

I alone will push from shore—and leave the
maiden!”

So he downward sped with swift foot to the
landing,—

But he found nor boat nor maiden. Only harshly
In his face swept drops of bullet-like fierce sea-
spray.

“Ah!” he said, “I might have known.—The tide
has risen.—

And the maiden has not sailed upon these waters.
Since she first could haul a sheet or hold a tiller,
To be baffled in the launching of her shallop!
Ev’n the mad waves she would make to do her
bidding.”

Then he strained his eyes far out into the offing :
Sail nor boat, nor maid nor lover, met his vision—
Blackness only, and the rushing of the tempest,
And the distant swirl and swash on the bare
ledges.

And there was no other boat on all the island !

“I shall better see,” he thought, “from out the
lantern.”

So he ran. But when again he gained the tower,—
When high-perched he stood within his lofty
eyrie,—

To look forth he dreaded. Yet the lurid lightning,
Flashing still each moment, called him to the
window.

As he stood there, gazing out into the blackness,
On his burdened mind swept multitudes of
visions,—

Of the days when he and Albin, boys together,
On the neighboring beaches sported, or, in rude
boats

Their own hands had fashioned, paddled on the
river ;

Of the happy days when, arm in arm, they
wandered

To the busy shipyards sweet with pine and resin,
On the river's western margin, and with buoyant
Eager hearts sailed outward in imagination
Over sun-lit seas and to far fragrant islands;

Of the later days, when Albin, seeking labor,
Came to keep the lighthouse and to tend the
beacon;

Of his confidence, still later, when of Rhobe
He one day vouchsafed to speak, and trusted
Walter

With the tidings of their mutual affection.

Then recalled he how one day upon the river,
When the Little Ella sailed at early morning,
In his fishing-schooner he had passed the maiden,
And,—himself unseen,—had overheard her singing,
And had caught these words, as on the air they
floated:

“O my Albin! my beloved!”—these her words
were.

“Thou my hope and star of promise for the future !

I indeed have gladly sailed upon the river,
And have sailed ere yet there came the gleam
of morning,
To behold thy distant presence in the beacon !

“God be with thee in thy solitude, my Albin,
And his angels from the breath of harm preserve
thee !

Be thy voyage o'er life's sea a voyage holy ;
Be thy guide the glorious rays of Bethlehem's
starlight ;
Be at last the eternal port of Heaven thy haven !

“And my Albin, if perchance thou now mightst
hear me,

List I pray thee to the prayer to Heaven I utter :
That when finally may come to thee the sum-
mons

Which shall call thee to the land of the Here-
after,

Not alone thy feet may tread the verge eternal ! —

“Separated never, during life’s ascendant;
Separated never, when the grave would part us!
Arm in arm entwined, the when the Bridegroom
calleth;
Heart to heart enchained, in life’s fast final
throbbings;
Hand in hand tight held, nor ever more to sun-
der!”

Standing leaning with pale face against the lantern,
As upon his mind returned the maiden’s prayer,
“O prophetic words! too soon fulfilled!” cried
Walter.

Then again a flash lit up the wide-flung waters,
And the fountains of the great deep seemed
upbreaking.

One glimpse only, Walter caught, through all the
darkness,
Throughout all the terrible, drear hours till day-
light,
Of the sloop which had been called the Little
Ella!

Mastless, water-logged, she seemed, and all but
sinking,

And amid her shattered stays two forms seemed
clinging.

—When the daylight came, and down the rocky
terrace

Walter hastened to the shore to search the ledges,
Scattered were the rocks and sands with wide-
flung seaweed,

With old spars and timbers and huge piles of
driftwood ;—

And a few short boat-lengths outward on the
current,

On the sullen crest of the subsiding billows,
Slowly floating at the dawning of the morning,
Slowly drifting with the shifting of the waters,
Driven here and there, were fragments of the
shallop—

Fragments only, of the sloop the Little Ella.

And a rod or two beyond the narrow landing,
On the rocks up-tossed, and still together clinging,

With the seaweed in their hair and on their faces,
And the sea-shell's pallid hue where crimson
dulses
Yesterday had blushed less ruddy, Walter found
them.

Gone are many years, since on the rocky island
At the edge of Ocean Albin kept the lighthouse;
Gone are many years, since Rhobe on the river
Sailed at early morning in the Little Ella;
And the granite tower is lanternless and ruined.

Over the bald turret creeps the tender ivy,
And around it cling the golden-rod and yarrow.
But anigh the base of the old, crumbling ruin
Rises proudly a more brilliant, powerful beacon:
And the people call it ever, "Albin's lighthouse."

A few feet from the old tower there blossoms lowly,
Hidden half by ivy, a green mound—one only.

Here they rest—the maiden Rhobe and her lover;
Here in calm they lie, while vainly roars the
Ocean;
Here in peace repose they, steadfast, and forever.

Few of all the listless multitudes who daily
Throng the busy steamers plying on the river,
Know the tender story of the love of Rhobe;—
Eyes with wonder lifted to behold the lantern
As they pass beneath it, see not where she
slumbers.

Loving hands, however, who her tale remember,
And who know the valor of the death of Albin,
Yearly twine green ivy o'er the graven tablet
Which records the story of their true devotion,—
Of their hopes in life, and of their death together.

And the chisel, on one side of the white tablet,
Has engraved the legend, “Trebly better were it
When calls Duty, sternest voice of God or Nature,
Ev'n to perish, than to fail in the fulfilling!”
And upon the other side is writ this stanza:

“Separated never, during life’s ascendant;
Separated never, when the grave would part them!
Arm in arm entwined, the when the Bridegroom
 called them;
Heart to heart enchained, in life’s fast final throb-
 bings;
Hand in hand tight held, nor ever more to sun-
 der!”

.....Many are the sloops, and many are the
 schooners,
Which upon the widening current of the river
Sail at early morning, sail at purple twilight,—
Sloops and schooners filled with happy, smiling
 faces;
But among them never Rhobe sails, nor Albin:

Nor ever more upon the bosom of the river,
On the surface of the Kennebec’s slow current,
Slowly floating at the dawning of the morning,
Slowly drifting with the shifting of the waters,
Sails the jaunty little sloop, the Little Ella.

THREE FRAGMENTS

FROM AN UNFINISHED ALLEGORY.

I. WALNUT HILL.

(Medford, near Boston, Massachusetts.)

A NOONTIDE sun, in early Summer-time ;
Low, billowy summits, in their verdant prime,
Bounding a valley wide and fair and still :
And in the midst, the slopes of Walnut Hill !

On all the northern hand,—far-reaching, gray,—
The heights of Winchester, in rude array ;
And trending east, where lakes like sapphires burn,
The Fells of Middlesex, embowered in fern.

Still east, the sea ! a silvery line and thin,
Hedged by the rocky heights of distant Lynn ;
And near at hand, slow-winding, placid, blue,—
Along whose banks once Paul Revere flew,—

The Mystic's narrow tide—expanding soon
Into a crystal mere, a broad lagoon,
Reflecting far, from morn till evening hour,
Gray Bunker's lofty, sun-illumined tower.

Southward, the city—dreary desert vast!...
Haste thee, my verse! beware the woe! fly fast!...
Far, far beyond, see Milton's purple hills,
The blue-domed range which every bosom thrills;
And nearer,—where the marbles hide from view
The ashes of a Sumner and Ballou,—
Fair Auburn! circled by a hundred farms,
And clasped in sluggish Charles's sinuous arms.

Westward, the fertile fields of Alewife Brook,
Laughing with harvests ripening for the hook,—
Flecked by the shadows of vast clouds that float
Aimless as shipwrecked sails on seas remote,—
Edged by low mountains, shimmering in the sun,
The emerald Heights, far-famed, of Arlington!
Enchanted hills, which, when the day is past,
Are tipt with glory such as Nebo cast
When angels hastened o'er its darkening crest,
Bearing the Hebrew prophet to his rest!

II. HEART OF YOUTH.

NORTHWARD and eastward from this favored scene,—

This Walnut Hill, this college-crowned demesne,—
Beyond the river flowing at its feet,
Beyond the whirl of village pier and street,
There winds a road through rarest sylvan ways,
The ever new delight of summer days.

Here darkling thickets, densely green, abide,
Hazel, and oak, and birch, on either side,—
Where the brown partridge unseen whirrs, and
where

Gray squirrels lurk, and rabbits have their lair.
Here blooms the barberry, in yellow sprays,
Miles long! and here, through all the summer days,
The sweet wild rose and fragrant wilding phlox
Vie with the garden pinks and hollyhocks
Which shall be crowned the fairer! And the prize
No single wanderer, passing with pleased eyes,
Withholds from Nature's wilding ones, here strowed
Luxuriantly.

.....Along this sunny road

Two friends were walking at the noon of day;
And both were thoughtful, though they both were
gay.

They both were thoughtful; but the summer air,
The sunshine through the branches here and there,
The laughing bobolink, the cawing crow,
The blue above, the emerald below,
Made life that hour so beautiful a dream,
That rustling leaf nor onward murmuring stream
Could less of sorrow feel, or wild despair,
Than these companions idly wandering there.

For both were young! and in the soul of each
Were aspirations deeper than all speech:
Ambitions for the honor which the world
Stands ready to inscribe on flags unfurled
In noble causes;—aspirations, too,
That honor granted should be honor due.

They dreamed of sacred fire withheld by Gods:
They knew of Caucasus, and of the odds
Prometheus wrestled with, and all his pain;
And yet they dared it all, and more, again;
And with the vultures' whirr still sounding nigh,
They dared to rest their ladder on the sky.

Upon the shore of Time they would not sit.
The Ocean was before! and they were knit
Unto a firm resolve, by faith upheld
To walk the waters! If they boiled and welled,
The way would be more difficult; if calm,
The port were sooner reached—the Isles of Palm.
Nor did they hesitate to point their feet
To where life's ocean and horizon meet.

They knew—yet were not daunted—wild with
spray
The vengeful tempest would assail their way.
They knew men's bones lay bleaching in the
sand;
They saw the carcasses tossed high on land
Of earnest voyagers who yesterday
Had left the beach as buoyantly as they.
But these (they said) had sailed without a chart:
Or failed to use it: and the human heart,
By passion ballasted, to escape the brine
A special port must own, and chart divine.

III. “BY PASSION BALLASTED.”

WITH this they turned into a narrow lane,
Half hidden in the leafy underbrush;
A fragrant avenue, whose sacred hush
Was broken by the rumble of no wheel,
No whirl of dust, no echo but the peal
Of sporting bobolinks; and where the moss
A soft rich tapestry spread wide across;
And all along, as far as eye could reach,
The birch and hazel boughs and silver beech
Threw grateful shade.

“This winding road,” said one,
“Will guide us to the mountain-top. The sun,
Which hitherto hath flamed upon our way
With furious heat, will here its fury stay,
And cooling breezes now will fan our cheek.
The road is sure. I heard my father speak
But yesterday of climbing this same path.”

The other lingered. “Greater beauty hath
The wilding thicket for my mood,” said he.

“Behold ! a rod beyond this sumach-tree
Sharply the mountain’s base begins to rise.
Why toil we on ! ‘Reward of high emprise’
Is here at hand ! Behold ! the forest floor
Is thick with violets ! And here a door
Between the maple-trunks seems opening wide,
Inviting us to enter. In !” he cried,
And caught his comrade’s arm, and sought
To lure him.

But his zeal availed him naught.

“One moment, brother mine !” his comrade said.
“We started out, the mountain’s highest head
Intent to reach. Shall we be baffled here,
By violets ? And yonder buds, I fear,
Are not the violets your haste has thought.
Those purple petals, delicately wrought,
With subtle odor, poisonous, are filled.
The deadly nightshade, if your eyes were skilled,
You would declare them ! And your open door
Is barred with stone and briar. The forest floor
To which with sudden frenzy you would haste,
Look you, is marshy ground—a miry waste.”

“Enough!” perversely here the other cried.
“Give over! Get you up the mountain-side!
Keep to your mossy pathway if you will—
The roughest road is soonest up the hill!
I shall stop here awhile, among the flowers,
And rest beneath the trees. In after hours
I’ll join you on the mountain’s topmost height.
I know not how I shall ascend, but night
Will not have fallen ere I join you. Go!”

He waited not for answer: but the low
And sympathetic voice which oft had held
Him humbled with its music, rose and swelled,
And broke upon his ear in sweetest tone
Of friendship, begging, “Leave me not alone!”
In notes of warning, crying, “Do not go!”

He waited not for answer: but the low
Wind murmured in his ear, and seemed to say:
“Twere better, better, thoughtless youth, to stay!
To stay were better!” And as on he passed,
Still heedless,—with a deeper, warning blast,
“The way is long!” it sighed, “and short the
day!”—

It shouted! and the woodland echoed, “Stay!”

He waited not for answer: but a brood
Of white-winged doves flew over where he stood,
Seeming to whisper, as they wung their way
On rapid pinion heavenward, "Stay, O stay!"

He waited not for answer—in he strode,
At once his friend forsaking, and the road.
Mindless of all—of pain or torn attire—
He leaped the wall and scrambled through the
briar.
His soul was innocent of thought of ill;
His heart, untried, was buoyant; and his will
Was steadfast (so he thought) to do the right.
What matter where he wandered, if the night
Should not have fallen ere he gained the peak!

But surely, so it seemed, across his cheek,
The winds, which kissed him in the sun-lit way
Where he before had wandered—which in play
Had sported with his hair and fanned his brow—
Were blowing searchingly and damply now.
And when he looked, and saw upon his hand
A score of crimson drops—a purple brand

The briars had punctured; when he felt the pain,
At first forgot, now doubly felt again;
And looking down beheld the dust, the burrs,
Thick fastened on him—shaken from the furze:
Backward he cast a lingering glance, and stood
As one irresolute. The ground was strewed
With stubble, broken stones, with last year's leaves:
A prospect desolate. As one who grieves
For pleasures vanished, and would fain return,
So stood he now, and felt his pulses burn
With shame that he had wandered from the way.
Again he heard the wind! It seemed to say,
“Repent! return! ye have not wandered far!”
Above his head, from out his golden car,
The Sun, Apollo, threw a quickening beam.
Back flew the irised host of doves, agleam
In every pinion with a golden glow;
And circling in the air, above, below,
“Ye have not wandered far!” they seemed to
cry,—
“Repent! return!”—then vanished in the sky.
Again he heard a voice—or seemed to hear.
Or voice or echo, sounding in his ear

It startled him, as if before his eye
His friend deserted had come suddenly.

He listened,—turned,—had fled the dull abode,
And in a moment would have gained the road,—
When yonder field again his eye besets,
The purple field—to him still violets!

“I will not go,” he cried,—and on his knees
Down flung himself,—“till I have gathered these!”

A stagnant stream was there. It did not flow,
But moved to right or left as wind might blow;
And on its surface curling leaves careered
And severed lily-pads. Dim, withered, weird,
A ghostly cypress-tree and meadow-larch
Above the margin reared a rugged arch,
Throwing a slanting shadow on the rank
Wet deadly nightshade growing on the bank.

And here the seeker after purple flowers
Knelt fondly down to while away the hours.

THE SCHOOLMASTER'S DREAM.

WEARY with toil, at desk and board and book,
Gladly he dropped the crayon in its nook ;
But forcing to his lips a kindly smile,
And touching with soft hand his bell the while,
Said cheerfully, "The hour to close is nigh :
The setting sun drops down the western sky.
To-morrow, with new ease, will come new strength ;
We reach, perchance, untiring days at length!"
Then rang again, and noting the sweet grace
And eagerness that lit each fair young face,
Dismissed them all into the evening air
With fervent blessing and an inward prayer.

The master's soul was sorrowful with doubt —
He whose triumphant faith should be so stout.
His pupils were so sluggish in the arts !
They had such feverish and impatient hearts !
"O soul!" he said, "thy toil meets no return.
Life's cheeriest fires to blackened embers burn.

No adequate return," again he said,
And on the desk before him leaned his head.
The western windows opened to the blue;
The sinking sun sent slanting shadows through:
He saw it not, nor heard the droning flies,—
But lulled by Nature's opiate, closed his eyes.

He sees nor hears—his soul's tired pinions sweep
The shadowy vale of Death's twin-brother, Sleep.
All day, sad voices, sounding in his ear,
Had filled his spirit with a nameless fear.
Surely no followers, in this sunless land,
Would jeer and beckon him on every hand!
But ah! ev'n here,—though with no taunt or
shout,—
A myriad spirits thronged him round about;
And with a soothing sound, as of a wind
Low-breathing through the fragrant groves of Ind,
A single angel—not of gloom, but light—
Said tenderly, "O King, thy wrongs recite!"

"Alas!" the master said, "no King am I!—
Even the crown of laurel-leaves is dry

Which in my younger years my sister wove,
Because at college, among all who strove,
I, only, won, and bore away the prize!"
"Nay," said the angel, "principalities,
States, empires, kingdoms,—these all pass away,
Forgotten even in an earthly day.
The crown immortal, the enduring throne,—
These to be steadfast must be like thine own!
He who the Light to one dark soul shall bring,
Among the sons of men is more than King.

"No word thou utterest, or good or ill,
But sounds forever,—wild or soft or shrill,—
Fast held within the vibrant air's embrace.
If words of thine shall brighten one sad face,
Thine accents ease a brother's heavy load,
Thy daily task reveal where Truth is strowed,
Then rest content! for there shall come a year
(And soon shall come) when back into thine ear
With ten-fold power thy words, or ill or good,
Shall speed with force that may not be withstood.
Then happy thou, if in thine ear shall ring
Words that shall crown thee servant,—helper,—
king!"

The master smiled—his face with peace was lit
Where lately pain had overshadowed it.
“But, sympathy!” he cried. “Sweet spirit, stay!
Fain would I have some token by the way.
Daily I toil, nor meet a single smile
To ease the burden of one lonely mile!”
“Awake!” the angel answered,—“thou art blind.”
He raised his head. “Please, sir, we stayed
behind,—
You fell asleep,—you would not wake for us!”
(Two little-ones beside his knee spoke thus.)
“You love us, and try hard,—we know you do;
And we have brought this little flower for you!”



WENTWORTH BROOKS ROBBINS.

IN MEMORIAM.

I.

WITH hearts enchain'd, and grateful, keen de-light,

We gazed into the mid-September sky ;—
A new star, then un-named, intense and bright,
Rising, had met our eye !

Nightly we watched the fair, ascending orb,
More beautiful, more luminous each hour.

Never did other sun our souls absorb
With more supernal power.

Six fleeting months it gleamed—until its rise
Was looked for, and we grew to love its
beams.

And then,—as suddenly as the swift lightning flies,
As break the mountain streams,—

There loomed a cloud above the horizon's bar,
Which, while we groaning gazed into the Night,
Enshrouded all the scene, and hid the star
Forever from our sight.

And hid the star!—yea, hid!—but quenched it
not!

Beyond our sharpest doubt, beyond our fear,
The star, with radiance transcending thought,
Shall sometime reappear.

And even now, though hidden from our sight,
Behind the clouds it in full beauty glows,
Gleaming with fadeless, more resplendent light
Than when it first arose.

II.

UPON the surface only, wild with glee,
The white waves dance with all the winds that
blow:
They only learn the secrets of the sea
Who fathom far below.

To those who knew him least, he might have seemed—

That comrade whom with many tears we mourn—
Like one who lived for sport; who never dreamed
He for aught else was born.

Ye never knew him as ye should have known,
Ye who would judge him with a judgment thus!

A tenderer heart throbbed never, than his own,
Nor more magnanimous.

And not in vain he lived, though brief his day:
His blithesome heart oft stole away our care;
Long in our lives his influence will stay,
Blessing us unaware.

III.

THE April morning wore a cloudy vail;
Across the mountain-tops gray vapors passed;—
Weeping for him who prostrate lay and pale
The sleet and rain fell fast.

But with the noon the sky no longer grieved;
The sun-lit earth grew luminous and bright.
Even the up-heaved sod—for *him* up-heaved—
Grew golden in the light.

With slow sad steps we bore him to the grave
While on his pall the flowers and smilax lay,—
And wept we that a soul like his should have
No longer life than they.

But beautiful it was, if he must die,
To reach his rest in such a time and scene,—
Mourned by such tender love, and brought to lie
Beneath such sky serene.

And there we left him—where he oft had roved
To greet at morn each mountain's purple
dome;—
In constant sight of the dear hills he loved,
His happy summer home.*

—*Tuftsian.*

* See Note at end of volume.

“IF I WERE A STREAM ON A
MOUNTAIN.”

[WHAT GRANDFATHER SAID TO THE BOYS.]

If I were a stream on a mountain, I'd be
The merriest stream in the whole wide world.
I would laugh through the wood, and would run
o'er the lea,
And would haste to the far-off, billowy sea,—
To the white-sailed ships with their wings
unfurled;
And there, though my waves into foam were
hurled,
I would still be the merriest stream in the
world.

If I were a rainbow, I'd strive to be
The fairest one ever wide-hung in the sky.
If tempest and clouds should roll over me,
With my own glad, radiant beauty, in glee,
To invest them with color and glory I'd try;—

And if 'neath their gloom I must die, I would
die!

But still as the rosiest bow in the sky.

If I were a juniper-tree, I would be
The greenest and shadiest tree in the earth.
Expanding my cone-covered foliage free,
I would laugh in delight and make jubilee
At the odors balsamic to which I gave birth;—
And if I must fade in the Fall and the dearth,
I would fade as the juniper greenest on earth.

If I were a boy again, I would be
The merriest, happiest boy in the land.
The sun would shine warm, flowers bloom for
me,—
And I, with an answering beauty and glee,
Would lend to the helpless a helping hand,—
On the hill-top of Service would take my stand,
The most sympathetic boy in the land.



DEATH OF MY FRIEND.

WHAT! is that good Year dying?—
The Year that has done so much for me?
That so often has had a kind touch for me?

Out in the cold there, dying?—
Poor Year! what a sorrowful end for thee!
Thou that hast been such a friend to me!

And is never a mourner wailing?—
Is the whole wide hemisphere rollicking?
The world with a foundling frolicking?

Old Year, there surely is wailing!—
My heart in deep sympathy bleeds for thee!
My tongue this sad requiem reads for thee!

December 31, 1878.

“I FAIN WOULD BOW BEFORE
THE LORD.”

[Thoughts of an unwilling doubter, on reading the dispatches announcing the scenes of horror at the late destruction of towns by earthquakes in Central America.]

I FAIN would bow before the Lord—
I grasp him not—he reigns afar;
He hides within the mountain scar;
The lightning is his gleaming sword.

I fain would take his hand in mine—
He glows amid the stars of Night.
I see his wisdom and his might—
He needeth Love to be divine!

I find him in the trees and rocks;
The Universe proclaims a God.
But is it tenderness—the rod
That calls to life the earthquake’s shocks?

At morn a man to worship goes:
The preacher tells him "God is Good."
At noon a populous neighborhood
Is swallowed in earth's central throes.

And what of all the shame, the wrong,
The want, the crime that stalks abroad!...
Still rant ye of the love of God?—
Then groaning cry I, "Lord, how long!"

What care hath He for mortal men!
We are but beetles in his sight.
We mouth about the wrong, the right—
He laughs! We fade to earth again.

O Love Divine! enlarge my Faith!
Confusions, these, of finite thought!
Aid me to judge thee as I ought,
Nor longer hug this mocking wraith.



WORDS AND DEEDS.

WORDS ! ah, words ! 'Tis easy writing
Of the ardor men should feel :
But 'tis harder, Paris, smiting
Armed Achilles in the heel.

THE SORROWING WIND.

I SAT awaiting one who did not come.
Against my window the October rain
Pattered a weird and pitiful refrain—
Never dear Mother Nature's voice is dumb.
Drearly, as in penitence, the wind
Murmured a Miserere—had it sinned?
Had it been boisterous upon the deep?
Had it been cruel—tossing ships about,
And sending sailors to their watery sleep?—
With aimless fury and disastrous rout
Had it been leveling dim forest aisles,
And devastating fields for miles and miles?

DRIFTING.

I AM drifting, I am drifting
On a shifting, shifting sea ;
And above me clouds are lifting—purple, rosy
clouds are lifting
Wide their ægis over me :
And between each shattered rifting,
And between each floss and fold,
Downward on my passage Phœbus—radiant Phœ-
bus—glistens, sifting
Iris hues and gold.

Stately islands, stately islands
Rise beside me and before ;
And amid their vernal highlands—from amid their
shadowy highlands
Voices lure me to the shore :
For as in the swampy Nile-lands
Ghosts of priests of Isis dance,
So amid these vernal islands—here amid these
shadowy highlands
Fairy Ariels prance.

They are calling, they are calling
To the silvery, sandy beach !
Where delicious fruits are falling—ripened from
the trees are falling—
Pear, pomegranate, peach !
Fruits of Eden, never palling
On the taste or to the eyes ;
Purple grapes and figs, forestalling—in their lus-
cious tints forestalling
Dreams of Paradise !

I am weary—I am weary
Of the tugging of the oar !
And behind me, dull and dreary—wide and wild,
and dull and dreary,
Swells the swelling ocean floor.
And I gladly, oh, I gladly
Turn my shallop to the shore,
Where the murmuring waves shall madly—where
the mocking waves shall madly
Beat and buffet me no more.

We are drifting, we are drifting
On the shifting sea of life :

And above us clouds are lifting—dark and ominous clouds are lifting,
Dim with turmoil and with strife.
Dim with turmoil—bright with blessing !
Storm and sunshine intermixed !
Ever, through earth's doubts distressing, heaven's
persuasive lights are pressing,
On the headland ages fixed !

There are voices, calling, calling ;
And they beckon us away ;
And amid the dim, appalling, fear-inspiring darkness falling,
We can seem to see the Day !.....
O ye Voices ! heavenly Voices,
Speaking to me,—saying “Write !”
May the message that rejoices far outweigh all
other choices !
Bid my pen be dipt in light !



EARLY FRAGMENT.

1870.

NOT greatly distant from the sounding sea
Beside whose edge I frequent wend my way,
An ancient forest, deep and silent, lies,—
Reputed home of nymph and woodland fay.
Verdant primeval arches rise o'erhead,
And hide the earth from sunlight and the sky ;
And drooping mosses hang from every limb—
Gauze-curtains, swaying in the East-wind's sigh.

The hemlock and the pine are brothers here ;
Their branches they in mutual friendship wield ;
And when the winter blasts and snows appear,
Each strives the other from the storms to shield.
Oh, would that men might here a lesson learn,
And all, as one, their strength and faith compare :
That when were nigh the fitful storms of life,
The strong the burdens of the weak might bear.

EPILOGUE—“FINISHED.”

THE year is finished—finished is the book.
The year was full of days, for good or ill:
With us it lay the fleeting hours to fill
With noble deeds. Long hours in dale and
nook,
Where haunted pines their odorous needles shook,
Where fern and flower their dewy fragrance
spill,
It gave for our delight. 'Tis dying! Still,
New years remain! With fervor let us look
To make them really ours.—And thou, my page!
As years with days, so thou with words art
full!
Oh, happy I, if on thy friendly way
Some thought of cheer thou give, to youth or
age,
Some life encrimsoned make as white as wool,
Some sorrowing heart allure to dream of day!

December, 1880.

LINES.

THE POET'S AFTERTHOUGHT.

THE clay my fingers yearned to mould,
And modeled as they slowly could,
I find 'becoming hard and cold—
 Retaining with the strength of wood
The vines artistically scrolled,
The sculptured ferns and marigold—
 And having, it is understood,
 Of permanence a likelihood.
It may be that another year
Will prove the Age of Marble near.

NOTES.

Dedication.

These lines, together with the *Proem* to the present volume, were written in 1875, when the author meditated printing a small volume of his earlier verses—a project which was abandoned.

Page 72. The Bells of Como.

Pondering some verses appropriate to the Anniversary of the Society for which this narrative was written, the legend here presented was recalled and made use of. The barest suggestion only, of the story, was possessed by me, and the entire history of Michael, including the itinerary of his wanderings as here given, is my own. Since the poem was first printed (soon after its delivery), I have learned that the story has before met versification; but, on account of the inherent beauty and poetic possibilities of the legend, this fact was anticipated by me. I would be glad to meet with the other verses.

Page 123. Kalligo (pronounced with the accent on the first syllable).

The appended Note was prefixed to this poem on its original publication in 1881 —

The greater part of the following poem was written a number of years ago. Since 'hat time—owing to other engagements, mercantile and literary, on the part of the writer—it has remained unfinished. Friends who saw the earlier sheets, and who at frequent intervals have evinced a desire for the story in full, have now urged to its completion.

The early date of the composition (when the writer was not twenty years old) will perhaps explain, though it will not excuse, any possible imperfections in the design of the poem and the mechanism of the verses.

A word of comment concerning the facts presented: That he has not overdrawn, in his verses, the social and spiritual needs of a large class of people occupying the southern coastline States of this country,—Florida not only, but the States along the entire Mexican gulf to the extremity of Louisiana,—the writer is confident all observing travelers will admit. Scattered as these people are through vast territories of swamp and forest; living oftentimes for years in solitude; visited by the outside world only by accident, or through the promptings to adventure and travel which urge tourists to their marvelous landscapes; uneducated, uninformed, destitute entirely of refining influences,—it cannot be that in the simple, innocent,

N O T E S.

unpolished prayer of the Cracker the writer has overdrawn facts, or that in any part of the story which he has weaved to accompany his scenic descriptions, he has exceeded the license of fiction—except, it may be, as Truth itself is said often to exceed the daring of the imagination.

If what he has written shall perhaps at any time inspire to personal or missionary endeavor in behalf of the numbers of whom he has spoken, he will not have written in vain. And if the descriptions contained in the poem shall warm the hearts of his untraveled readers to a conception of the marvels of Floridan landscapes, as the writer's study in preparing for his task, and his frequent scenic plagiarism in carrying out the same, have warmed his own, he will be a second time gratified.

And so he leaves the poem with his friends, and bids them "Merry Christmas."

COLLEGE HILL, Christmas, 1881.

Page 154. "*These perfect days were never meant
For toil of hand or brain.*"

For these two lines, which have long sounded in my memory, I am indebted to a very pleasing mid-summer poem, entitled "Lotus Eating," met by me some years ago in the columns of the local press.

Page 155. "*The world is too much with us.*"

See Wordsworth's famous Sonnet, thus beginning.

Page 235. *Wentworth Brooks Robbins.*

Mr. Robbins, a student at Tufts College, was a young man of unusual social qualities, and endeared to all who knew him. He died at the early age of nineteen. Educated in boyhood in New York City, he partook of the bustle and excitement incident to society in the metropolis; but spending for many years his Summers in Keene, N. H., his nature was rounded and intensified by the beauty of the sky and the mountains: and although he did not manifest it openly, nor often even to those who entered deepest into his life, his spirit was calmed and glorified by a love for Nature and a belief in the Eternal wisdom and goodness. By the hands of his college friends, who had loved him in life, and who in death followed him with tears, he was laid to rest in a beautiful spot shut in by his own New Hampshire hills.







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